

AGRICULTURAL HISTORY

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THE AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

THE AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

is pleased to announce

the winner of its 1958 Annual Book Award as

DR. HARRY JAMES BROWN

Michigan State University

"Letters from a Texas Ranch, Written in the
Years 1860 and 1867 by George Wilkins Kendall
to Henry Stephens Randall."

The manuscript will be published in 1958 by
the University of Illinois Press.

MINNEAPOLIS MEETINGS

APRIL 24-25, 1958

HOTEL NICOLLET

— — — —

Thursday, April 24, 12:30 p.m.

LUNCHEON MEETING

of the

AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Write for reservations to Professor Gilbert C. Fite,
Department of History, University of Oklahoma, Norman.

— — — —

Friday, April 25, 3:00 p.m.

Hennepin Room

Joint Session of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association
and the Agricultural History Society

NEW DEAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Chairman: John D. Hicks, University of California

"Montana Contributions to New Deal Farm Policy"

Roy E. Huffman, Montana State College

"Franklin D. Roosevelt's Farm Policy as Governor of
New York State"

Gertrude A. Slichter, University of Illinois

"The New Deal Professors and Politics of Agriculture"

Richard S. Kirkendall, Wesleyan University

AGRICULTURAL HISTORY

A Publication of the Agricultural
History Society Edited at the
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C. Clyde Jones, Editor

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(Cover design is by the courtesy of the Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, Vt.)

THE AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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AGRICULTURAL HISTORY

The Quarterly Journal of the Agricultural History Society

Agricultural History is designed as a medium for the publication of research and documents pertaining to the history of agriculture in all its phases and as a clearing-house for information of interest and value to workers in the field. Materials on the history of agriculture in all countries are included, and also materials on institutions, organizations, and sciences which have been factors in agricultural development. The Society is not responsible for the statements or opinions of contributors. Editorial communications and books for review should be sent to C. Clyde Jones, Editor, Room 112, David Kinley Hall, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois.

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The Chartist Land Colonies 1846-1848

W. H. G. ARMYTAGE

At the Hall of Science, Campfield, Manchester, a large 48-year-old Irishman with a rich baritone voice rose to his feet on March 7, 1842 to deliver the first of two lectures. "I am going," he told his audience, "to propound to you a subject which is somewhat novel." That subject, and its novelty, was reflected in the title of the lectures: *The Land and its Capabilities* and *What is the remedy for our grievances*.¹ Considering the extensive propaganda which had been going forward during the previous decade his claim was, to say the least, presumptuous. Tytherley, Manea Fen, Pant Glas, even Etzler had all come within the purview of the *English Chartist Circular*. Indeed, in a notice of Etzler's pamphlets that journal had remarked "There are certainly a few passages . . . which, in our opinion, verge on the Utopian, but then there is quite enough of the *practical* to induce us to pronounce Mr. Etzler's projects deserving universal consideration."²

Feergus O'Connor was an adept in the appropriation of ideas, or indeed of anything. For five years he had sustained, with the help of workmen's pennies, the Chartist's newspaper, *The Northern Star*.³ He had drummed up the Great Northern Union of Working Men, for which he acted as secretary. He had surrounded himself with disciples whose apocalyptic language was either nurtured by mystical Swedenborgism (like William Hill)⁴ or the Old Testament (like the Rev. J. R. Stephens).⁵ He plugged away at a simple truth, and by plugging had at last secured its digestion. England should become a nation of smallholders and he would show how it could and should be done.

The phases through which his agrarian evangel had developed are easily explained. He was an Irishman. His father tried to prove that the Pagan civilization of Ireland had been ruined by Christianity; his uncle had married the daughter of the French economist, Condorcet. He himself

had run away to England with his brother in 1817, but had been returned to his father by Sir Francis Burdett, another eccentric. By sheer personal charm he became the legatee of an estate at Fort Robert, and reappeared in London in 1833 as M.P. for Cork, an aptly named constituency, for he floated successfully through all the storms of English political life after losing his seat in 1835. In his brief two-year stint in Parliament he had tried to introduce a bill to reform land tenures, but failed. Now, out of Parliament, he had taken himself to the North of England, where his brassy eloquence won him numerous admirers. For, after all, the dingy tenements of Manchester and Liverpool contained more than the average number of his former fellow-countrymen who had migrated thither on the fourpenny ferry. He told them (in the first year's issue of the *Northern Star*) of his uncle Arthur (Condorcet's son-in-law). He blessed the schemes of reformers whose ideas chimed with his (like Robert Owen). Indeed, in the *Northern Star* of June 16, 1838, he had endorsed Owen's idea of a communistic colony by calling on the de-

¹ An extant copy exists in the Foxwell Library of the University of London. Julius West, *History of Chartism* (London, 1920) could not find it, and wrote (p. 202) "This appears to be now lost, but Colonel Thompson's letters quote the most important passages."

² *English Chartist Circular* No. 128, p. 304. For Etzler see W.H.G. Armytage, "Technology and Utopianism: J. A. Etzler in England 1840-44," *Annals of Science*, 11:129-136 (1955), and for Manea Fen see W. H. G. Armytage, "Manea Fen: An Experiment in Agrarian Communitarianism 1838-1841," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 38:288-310 (1956).

³ It first appeared in November, 1837. For a lively retrospective account of this see William Hobson in the *Manchester Examiner*, November 12-16, 1847.

⁴ He subsequently became a Roman Catholic.

⁵ He was a nonconformist minister at Aashton-under-Lyne where he later started *The Ashton Chronicle* (1848-9). See G. D. H. Cole, *Chartist Portraits* (1941), 63-79. This has an exhaustive bibliography of Chartist literature and further notes cited here are supplementary to them.

positors of the £207,170 in the Leeds Savings Bank to withdraw their money and "invest" it in Owen. A spell in prison sharpened his ideas, and between July 10 and August 7, 1841, he had published five *Letters to Irish Landlords*, advising them to allocate a proportion of their lands to peasant holdings to increase their rents and keep the manufacturers from spoiling Ireland. The application of this principle to England was but a short step. Twenty million small landowners, he told readers of the *Northern Star*, would keep the ironmasters and cotton spinners out of Parliament.

Far from being depressed at the failure of similar schemes at this time, O'Connor became convinced that his was the right way. In 1843 he issued *A Practical Work on the Management of Small Farms*. This gave detailed instructions for the operation of small holdings. In the *Northern Star* of May 15, 1843 he argued that one such smallholder with four acres could, at a modest estimate, earn £100 a year. O'Connor wanted State sponsorship for his plan, and in order to encourage Parliament to take it up, he wanted the Chartists to do so first. He said so at the Chartist Convention in 1843.⁶ He repeated it at the Convention in 1844. And in April 1845, a convention of 14 delegates at the Parthenium, St. Martin's Lane, agreed to do so.

As O'Connor outlined it, the plan was simple. Large private estates were to be purchased and broken up into smallholdings. The purchase money was to be by weekly subscription for the purpose of the shares, the subscribers all balloting for the allotment of holdings. Each winner would receive a holding with a house, ready built, and a small loan of £7:10:—, and would pay rent equivalent to an interest of five per cent on the cost of the allotment, house and loan. This rent would enable more land to be bought for subsequent settlers. He calculated that, on the basis of three acres per family, he could place 24,000 families on the land in five years.

The *Leeds Mercury* had tried to nip the scheme in the bud by saying on May 27,

1843 that O'Connor had overestimated the productivity of land:

We have heard of bubble schemes frequently, but the South Sea bubble itself seems nothing to this chartist bubble, which can be compared only to the dreams of the Alchemists in their search after the philosophers' stone.

They soon changed their tune for O'Connor published in the *Northern Star* of September 9, 1843, a report which the editor, Edward Baines, had written in 1819 for the Leeds Overseers of the Poor, suggesting that settlement on the land was a desirable expedient.⁷ On September 23 of that year it was expressing its pleasure that the Chartists were "turning their attention to the cultivation of the land. It will give them an increased interest in the tranquillity and good order of society, and make them anxious to preserve whatever is valuable in the government and institutions of the country."

And to the workers, anxious to escape from the towns so graphically described by Engels in 1844, O'Connor's colonies seemed infinitely nearer and more desirable than the rather vague provisions of "The Charter." "The Land belongs to the people," he wrote early in 1845. "It is the people's heritage. Kings, princes, lords and citizens have stolen it from the people. Usurpation is the work of the rich and powerful."

His plan endorsed, O'Connor made a tour of Belgium in 1845. In Brussels he talked

⁶ J. H. Parry in *A Letter to Feargus O'Connor on the plan of organization issued by Birmingham Conference*, September 1843, wrote:

"The plan is yours and yours alone, none other is responsible for it, and to saddle it upon the great body of the Chartists is a gross insult to their intelligence of which none but you and your tools would dare to be guilty."

Parry was a Marylebone Chartist who declined nomination to conference saying:

"It was not a conference of the replies of the working classes, but a conference of Feargus O'Connor with Feargus O'Connor, on the best means of vending a quack political medicine, opined by Feargus O'Connor to be a remedy for all our ills."

⁷ This was written as a report on a visit to New Lanark made by Baines and two others in 1819. See Podmore, *Life of Owen* (1923), 147, 262 and 263.

with a group of exiled German communists, who presented him with an address of welcome, signed, amongst others, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. (Readers of the *Northern Star* on July 25, 1847, were thus treated to the sight of a pair of names which, if they meant nothing to them at the time, were to mean a lot later.) Engels was familiar with England and his good opinion of O'Connor was probably responsible for the welcome. For, as a resident of Manchester during the previous three years, he had made a detailed study of the English working classes which was just being published in Leipzig as *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klassen in England*.⁸

O'Connor had already opened his columns to Engels' lively pen (on October 9, 1847 he was to open them to Marx, also). O'Connor, like the quick opportunist he was, also took the opportunity of holding up the Flemish system of intensive farming as a model for his Land Scheme and gave his opinion, in the *Northern Star* of September 20, 1845, that if England were organized on a basis of small peasant proprietors it would be able to maintain a population of 300 million people.

The first estate was purchased in March, 1846. It was the Heronsgate estate, near Watford, comprising some 103 acres, and costing £2,344, including the valuations. In accordance with the O'Connorite plan, allotments were marked out, foundations were dug for the cottages, and general preparations for settlement put in train. A month later on April 10, a great ballot was held in Manchester to select the first 35 settlers (thirteen got 4 acres, five 3 acres and seventeen 2 acres). The settlement was formally renamed O'Connorville. Subscriptions rose to £5,000 a week, and soon the funds for buying land reached the total of £50,000. Even O'Connor was surprised. "When I first established it," he said, "I had no more notion of receiving £5,000 than I had flying in the air."

The sun shone, and to mark the high summer of events O'Connor staged a cricket match at O'Connorville in July between the carpenters and the bricklayers, which

the bricklayers won by 28 runs. Other diversions for the fabricators of the first colony lay in deep draughts—of milk—and a special name was chosen for the cow that supplied it—Rebecca—after the celebrated riots which had occurred in South Wales. Roads were laid between the cabbage plots, and christened from the former homes of the lucky winners of the ballot: Stockport Road, Bradford Road, Nottingham Road and Halifax Road. O'Connor himself, according to a witness, was "never off the scaffold" whilst the colony was being built. Each house cost £100 and their sturdy grace (which can still be visualised) and settling elicited a poem from Ernest Jones,⁹ one of O'Connor's acolytes:

See there the cottage, labour's own abode,
The pleasant doorway on the cheerful road,
The airy floor, the roof from storms secure,
The merry fireside and the shelter sure;
And, dearest charm of all, the grateful soil,
That bears its produce for the hands that toil.

In five months enough work had been done to hold an open day. On August 17, 1846 the colony was exhibited and from all over England visitors came: 12,000 of them according to the *Daily News*, 20,000 according to the *Northern Star*. To them all O'Connor made a great speech, claiming to be an "elevator," not a "leveller." "I wish to see," he cried, "the cottage the castle of the freeman instead of the den of the slave."

Within two months of this highly successful open day, he purchased another estate in Worcestershire called Lowbands. This was four times the price of O'Connorville—some £8,560—and the increasing magnitude of his transactions obliged him to approach the Registrar of Friendly Societies for "provisional" registration. It also obliged him to convene a conference in De-

⁸ Engel's residence in Manchester is described in all the standard lives.

⁹ Ernest Jones entered the Chartist leadership with a great speech at the Chartist Convention at Leeds in 1846. His poem, "O'Connorville," was published in the *Northern Star* for August 22 of that year and in January, 1847 he became joint editor with O'Connor of *The Labourer*. See John Saville, *Ernest Jones: Chartist* (London, 1952), 22-28.

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ember at Birmingham to consider the establishment of a Land and Labour Bank. This was duly established in January, 1847, and at the same time the name of the whole enterprise was changed from "The Chartist Land Company" to "The National Land Company." This new title became effective in March, 1847.

By now he was being accused of communism. In *The Labourer*¹⁰ he vigorously denied this. "My plan has no more to do with socialism," he exploded, with a fine metaphor, "than it has to do with a comet." How right he was. Yet he continued, "I am, nevertheless, a strong advocate of co-operation, which means legitimate exchange". But his fellow Chartists did not agree. Thomas Cooper, who had tried to point out that O'Connor was "unworthy of the confidence of Chartists," found himself ejected from the Chartist convention of 1846, while James Bronterre O'Brien,¹¹ editor of a rival paper *The National Reformer*, told his readers that "every man who joins these land societies is practically enlisting himself on the side of the Government against his own order." This was on January 9, 1847; by May 14, O'Brien had gone even further: "His land scheme," he wrote in the course of a blistering attack on O'Connor, "is a government plot to stifle in embryo our movement for the nationalisation of land and property."

In honour of O'Connor the first estate was named O'Connorville and was ready for occupation in May, 1847.¹² A contemporary account describes how the settlers arrived in Watford, were met by friends and others and were carried to O'Connorville in open carts to the sounds of music from a band. Crowds lined the streets to witness the arrival of a small property class to take possession of their "Holy Land." They were conducted to their respective abodes "all anxiously inspecting their castle and labouring field and though tired after a long day's journey, only terminated their researches when the sable clouds of night had spread its mantle over their little domains." T. M. Wheeler, formerly secretary of the National Land Company, moved in

to organise the settlers, who took formal possession on May 1, 1847. He was succeeded by Philip M. Smith. *England's May Day* exulted the title page of the published version of O'Connor's speech on that occasion, and the purchase of a third and fourth estate in the following month seemed adequate enough cause to rejoice.

A verse written at this time appeared in the Chartist press, ran as follows:

Has freedom whispered in his wistful ear
 Courage poor slave! Deleiverance is near
 Oh! She has breathed a summons sweeter still,
 Come, take your garden at O'Connorville.

The official opening of the estate was on August 17, 1847 and was attended by crowds from far and wide, all anxious to see how the experiment had succeeded.

Superior to all their criticism, O'Connor would appear on a public platform, waving a gigantic cabbage as tangible proof that O'Connorville had taken root, and that the others would, too.

The third estate, Minster Lovell in Oxfordshire (manager, Christopher Boyle) was 197 acres and the fourth, Snig's End in Gloucestershire, 268 acres. Minster-Lovell cost £10,878; Snig's End £12,000. Preparations for their settlement went ahead vigorously—especially, Minster Lovell where the pattern of cottage and allotment can be seen surviving vividly to this day. It was renamed Chatterville, and retains its association with that name on the present day Ordnance Survey.

Lowbands, Gloucester, the second colony, was formally settled on August 17, 1847. O'Connor came down to speak, and attracted the attention of *The Economist*, though the rain fell incessantly. "It does seem to offer," wrote its correspondent of O'Connor's plan, "a reasonable experiment, upon a small scale, of the establishment of a peasant proprietary in England."

Its praise of O'Connor's personal control seemed justified, and early in 1848, Char-

¹⁰ *The Labourer*, ii:154.

¹¹ For James Bronterre O'Brien see Cole, *Chartist Portraits*.

¹² I am indebted to Mr. G. Cornwall of Rickmansworth for much help in this section.

terville and Snig's End were settled, each with houses and a school, and a fifth estate, Dodford in Worcestershire was taken in January of that year.¹³

A former ally, Joshua Hobson, who had previously published the *Northern Star*, now attacked O'Connor in the *Manchester Examiner*. O'Connor travelled up and offered to re-pay every shareholder in Manchester, and told his audience that he had brought money with him to do it. "Nay, but we won't have it," cried his audience. "Well then," boisterously replied O'Connor, "I'll spend it all." "Do and welcome," cried his enthusiastic listeners.

He found friends in the most unlikely quarters. *The Gardner and Florist* ranged itself on his side. An artisan called William Robinson wrote a pamphlet saying that he was "convinced . . . [it] was the only means by which the working class can eventually improve their condition." A London stockbroker, Thomas Allsop, was so impressed by O'Connor's scheme that he accompanied him around the country and offered his advice as to the investment of funds of the National Land and Labour Bank. He even divided some of his own property near Lincoln into allotments with cottages and sold them by auction in May, 1848.

He went from strength to strength. In 1847, he was elected to Parliament for Nottingham. He began to flirt with the communists gathered in London in November, 1847 for whom Marx and Engels were drawing up the Communist Manifesto. Marx himself said that if the Chartists carried the six points of their charter they would "be hailed as the saviours of the whole human race."

This was heady praise, and when it was coupled with news of revolutions in Ireland and France, the two countries to which we have seen O'Connor was closely attached, he threw his weight behind the Charter. In the full flush of enthusiasm, in January, 1848, he contracted for the sixth estate of 280 acres. This one, Dodford, near Bromsgrove cost £10,350. Mathon, the fifth and most expensive estate (it was con-

tracted for £15,350) was still not paid for.

On April 1, 1848, he published an appeal:

The time has now arrived when we are entitled to the reward of our labour. . . . I would rather die than give up one particle of the Charter. . . . I would not give a fig for the Charter if we were not prepared with a solid, social system to take the place of the artificial one we mean to destroy; and it was good that we did not succeed earlier with the Charter, before we were ready with the new social system. Look at France; the great trouble of the Provisional Government, is the organisation of Labour. And so will it be in Prussia. . . . But in addition to the Charter we have land reform, which will give bread to the working men when the Charter is carried. The Charter and the Land! Protect us in our work, People of England! Sign the Petition!

O'Connor, it was said, envisaged a peasant republic in Britain with himself as president. A convention had been called at the Owenite Hall in John Street, Tottenham Court Road, to plan the presentation of the petition to Parliament similar to that of 1842. The only use which the offices of the National Land Company at 144 Holborn had for him at this time was that they housed the petition which was to be presented to Parliament on April 10. That petition, with its alleged five million signatures, was taken in three cabs to the House of Commons, where upon examination it proved a farce.

Local landowners and J. P.s were very apprehensive of the wild miners and textile operators from the North, who thrashed their pigs for squealing when the poor animals were asking to be fed, and feared that their "settlements" would have to be supported by the rates. Nor were these wild Northerners, thrusting into the fat acres of Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, at all popular.

So the Poor Law Commissioners sent John Revans to visit the five Chartist settlements.¹⁴ He visited O'Connorville in March and gave his opinion that the allotments were quite inadequate and the crops on them inferior to those on surrounding

¹³ For the most detailed exposition of the story of the settlements see *Parliamentary Papers*, 1847-8, XIX.

¹⁴ For his evidence see *ibid.*

farms. The livestock on each plot—four cows and a few pigs—had no hay and straw and therefore no means of making manure. Even the farm work was being done by the local farm labour. There were no implements, ploughs being borrowed from neighbouring farmers to help the "settlers." Nine of the 36 original settlers at O'Connorville he found had already left. This is not surprising, as their wives were unused to dairy work and could not bake bread.

At Minster Lovell, Revans found the settlers just arriving. At Lowbands (near Tewkesbury) the crops were better than at O'Connorville, and six of the original 40 settlers had left. At Snig's End (near Gloucester) he found the houses but none of the settlers had yet occupied them. "It seemed," he wrote "a large place, and there were as many allotments there, or more, than at Minster Lovell. He did not go to Bromsgrove. He was favourably impressed by the houses. Those at O'Connorville, Lowlands and Snig's End were of brick, and those at Minster Lovell of sandstone. But his most damning observation was repeated before a Select Committee of Parliament to investigate the affairs of the National Company, in the fourth of whose six reports it can be found.

... all those who occupy the Land Company's allotments with nothing more than the produce of their allotments to depend upon will fail to obtain a living . . . the operations of the Land Company are likely to lead to serious and sudden burthens upon the poor's rates in those parishes where they acquire land.

When he prophesied that their cows, fed on cabbages, would become diarrhoeic, and that the swedes offered them to eat would give the milk a "nauseous flavour," he spoke to hearers who could understand him.

The Committee of Enquiry set up by Parliament in 1848, exposed a number of anomalies which laid bare the bad management rather than the bad faith of O'Connor. They could only obtain three balance sheets, those for September 29 and December 25, 1847 and another for March 25, 1848. They found the society could not, and did not, come within the scope of the Friendly

Societies Act. It had no treasurer, accounts had never been presented, no money had ever been deposited in the bank in the name of the trustees, and when the money had been withdrawn from the bank to pay the deposit on the Heronsgate estate, no trustee had countersigned the order, neither did O'Connor purchase it in the name of the solicitor, Mr. W. P. Roberts, nor in that of the Chartist Land Co-operative Society, but in his own name.

The Parliamentary Committee found that there was a discrepancy of £3,000 in O'Connor's favour. He combed the evidence for further campaign material and offered to transfer the management of properties to three trustees. He persuaded John Sillet, a holder of a two-acre independent allotment in Suffolk, to write *A New Practical System of Fork or Spade Husbandry*. He proposed to wind up the company and to exclude all those who had paid up two-thirds of the shares by September 29, 1849. The Land Company would then be "the largest, the most remunerable, and the best conducted benefit society in the world." Meanwhile the fifth of the chartist communities was prepared for settlement.

At this point the settlers on his fourth estate, Snig's End, proved troublesome. They had not taken up their residence with the fanfares of their brethren at O'Connorville and Charterville. As their first winter on the land approached, they wrote to the *Leeds Mercury* of October 7, 1848, complaining that they felt like a lot of horses turned into a field and told to stop there till the grass grew. The settlers on the third estate, Minster Lovell (or Charterville) agreed. So at the Land Conference which met at Birmingham on October 30, 1848, O'Connor met better criticism. One old settler, James Beattie, loudly accused him of fraud. This, more than the failure of the petition or the proceedings of the select committee, led to a fall in receipts.

O'Connor worked like a man demented to restore confidence in the scheme. He left the Land Conference at Birmingham and spoke for three hours at Worcester swear-

ing great oaths that he would persevere in settling members on the land.

Settlers began to drift away from the estates early in 1849, and to arrest the drift, O'Connor summoned the next Land Conference at Snig's End in August of that year. The O'Connorville settlers rallied round him, because, to keep them happy, he had not been collecting their rents. But when he asked all Chartist settlers for half a year's rent in November, 1849, they refused to pay.

As his settlers grew restless, his constituents grew critical. The *Nottingham Journal* had been sapping away at his support. It attacked the "provisional" nature of the Land Companies' recognition, it insisted that all the estates were being held in O'Connor's own name. It had already referred to O'Connor as "the greatest swindler on a large scale that ever practised on the credulity of mankind . . . and [an] Irish pauper . . . amply provided for out of the funds and credulity of Englishmen." It accused him of playing off shareholders and settlers against each other. Now on January 1, 1850, they accused him of "wheeling the people of England out of £100,000" and asked their readers to order the *Nottingham Journal* in order "to witness the final overthrow of this great political imposter."

O'Connor took the only course open to him and sued the editor, Bradshaw, for libel. To make matters worse, Bradshaw secured J. A. Roebuck, a vituperative and able lawyer later known as "Old Tear 'em," as his counsel. O'Connor lost, and though his character was "unanimously" opined by the jury to be "unimpeached as regards his personal honesty," he had even more difficulty in raising money to meet the costs.

He was working hard to legalize the Land Company. In the Hilary Term of 1849 he applied to the Court of Queen's Bench for a writ of mandamus to the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, Tidd Pratt, ordering him to register the Land Company. Tidd Pratt refused to register it and in 1850 the Court of Queen's Bench upheld his refusal. So on July 9 of that year, O'Connor,

Doyle and M'Grath, Clark and Dixon, petitioned through Sharman Crawford for leave to present a Bill to dissolve the Land Company.

The settlers at Minster Lovell and Snig's End meanwhile had enlisted the assistance of Sir Benjamin Hall, M. P., against O'Connor, who regarded them as "located ruffians." On March 1, 1850 they declared that they would even live on roots rather than be evicted. O'Connor therefore offered Minster Lovell with its 82 cottages for sale in August at Oxford. The colonists appealed for funds to contest his right to do this. Nobody was anxious to buy the plots and the auction fell flat. O'Connor, now desperate, sent bailiffs to collect the rents from Snig's End colonists, but they sourly told the bailiffs that they would "manure the land with their blood" before it should be taken from them. The bailiffs were more successful at Minster Lovell and actually ejected the colonists, leaving them to the mercy of parish officers.¹⁵

The O'Connorville settlers were still loyal, and O'Connor and Wheeler hoped to save the scheme through them. So in May, 1851, they started the National Loan Society. This was to buy up the Land Company's estates and operate like a building society. But in August an Act was passed, largely owing to O'Connor's petition the previous year for dissolution of the Land Company, allowing the scheme to be liquidated. All who had purchased their lands through the Land Company were confirmed in their possession; all portions not bought by all others were to be sold. As he told the O'Connorville settlers on July 19, 1851:

If the located members on Minster Lovell, Snig's End and Lowlands had been as honest and industrious as the located members at O'Connorville, then the company would not have been wound up and I would have had thousands of cottages built.

In February, 1852 O'Connor began to ramble about his "unworthy settlers," and four months later was taken to Dr. Tukes private asylum at Chiswick. He died three

¹⁵ *The Times* carried reports of the troubles.

years later on August 30, 1855 at 18, Albert Terrace, Notting Hill Gate. And, when he was buried at Kensal Cemetery on September 10, over 50,000 people came to his funeral.

What did O'Connor accomplish? He certainly found 70,000 members to subscribe to his scheme, but it took £6,000 to put the names of all of them on the books. Finlason, the actuary of the National Debt, calculated for the Parliamentary Select Committee which investigated the scheme, that it would require £21,000,000 to place all the 70,000 subscribers on the land and to do this would take 300 years. His settlements continued. The largest of these, Charterville in Oxfordshire, consisted of 80 holdings varying from 2 to 4 acres with cottages and buildings, and a road between them. It can still be seen. Until 1887 most of these small cultivators did well, for Charterville was situated in a large corn-growing, stock-raising area; they grew potatoes and got a monopoly of the market. In 1914 the original 80 holdings were reduced to 69, of which 25 were dependent on the cultivation of the plots. The occupants of these, of whom 18 were farm labourers, treated them as adjuncts to another source of income.

Of the other settlements less is known. He left two sons, born out of wedlock to a local girl at O'Connorville. One, Rory, died young, the other, Feargus, lived to be an old man.¹⁶ O'Connorville was auctioned at "The Swan" in Rickmansworth in May, 1857. At that time only three of the original settlers remained in possession of their plots. At Snig's End the inhabitants who had so courageously declared they would "manure the land with their blood before it would be taken from them," failed miserably to earn a living by growing potatoes and started an experiment in glove-making, which also failed. Their school became a public house, "The Prince of Wales," and exists as such to this day.¹⁷ At Lowbands, by 1868, a visitor remarked:

The importation of the Chartist colony into this parish in the year 1847 . . . had a disastrous effect on the moral and social condition of the people and has nearly doubled the poor-rates. The Lowbands settlement is still occupied either by the deluded disciples of that visionary leader or their successors. At death of O'Connor the Court of Chancery confirmed the right of ownership to each holder by granting them a title, and the estate has since generally fallen into the hands of a Manchester man, who is said to entertain similar views. A New Bible Christian Chapel¹⁸ was established on behalf of these colonists a few years ago.

The scheme reverberated down the century, stirring interest in the most unlikely places. Thirty years later, in 1875, the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* sent a special special commissioner, Mr. Longstaff, to visit all the Chartist settlements. He wrote a most stirring account, much appreciated in the radical north-east.

In 1902, the memory of the settler at Charterville who chastised his pig for noisiness was still alive. All but two of the settlers families had "drifted back" to the towns. Yet, as Mrs. Sturge Gratton remarked at the time, "the holdings are now a success being all occupied by agricultural labourers who pay rates and rents varying from eight pounds to fourteen pounds. Strawberries are grown for the Oxford market and good potatoes are sent to Bristol."¹⁹

But by that time other schemes, like that of the Salvation Army at Hadleigh and George Lansbury at Hollesley Bay, showed that O'Connor's idea for rehabilitating a landed peasant proprietary class was not as Utopian as it seemed.

¹⁶ Information from Mr. G. Cornwall of Rickmansworth.

¹⁷ E. E. Kerby, "Three Acres and a Spade," *Country Life*, December 22, 1955.

¹⁸ J. Noake, *Guide to Worcestershire* (1868), 308.

¹⁹ M. Sturge Gretton, *Three Centuries in North Oxfordshire* (1902), 175.

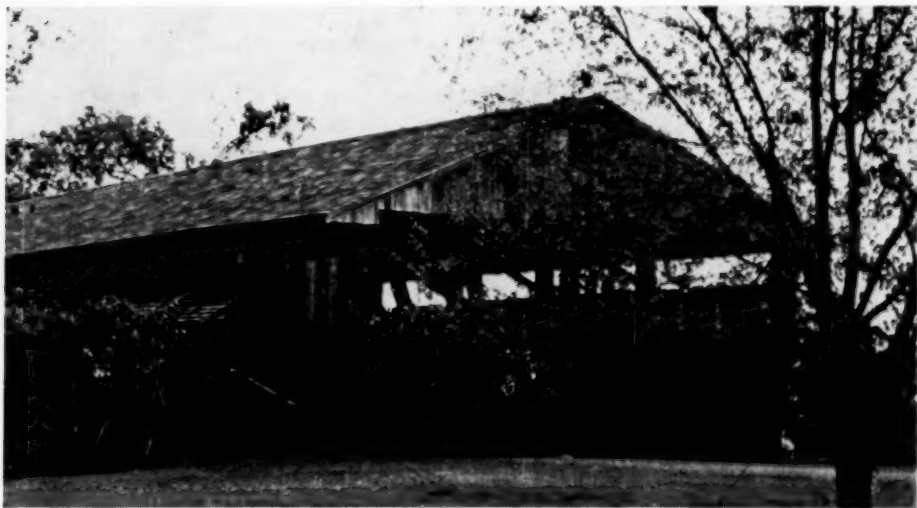
Shelburne Museum

Shelburne, Vermont

Not far from the green hills of Vermont, a few miles south of Burlington, is an interesting chapter in early American history. To find it, a traveler should turn off U. S. Highway 7 in the town of Shelburne and cross the double-lane covered bridge (pictured below) which serves as the entrance to the Shelburne Museum grounds. The Museum's 21 buildings dot a 25-acre tract on the eastern shore of Lake Champlain. Here, early Vermont and New England come to life in the Stagecoach Inn (1783), the Charlotte Meeting House (1840), the Vergennes School (1830) and the Prentiss House (circa 1733) with its early 18th century furnishings. The Museum barge carries visitors to Vermont House (1790)—the home of a retired sea captain—to see the exhibits of American Queen Anne and Chippendale furniture and then on to Dorset Castle (circa 1840) with its collection of more than 700 bird decoys. Near Colchester Lighthouse (1871), the 892-ton sidewheeler, *Ticonderoga* (1906)—the last sidewheel passenger packet

of her kind—lies permanently "docked" alongside "Old 220," the last 10-wheel steam locomotive on the Central Vermont Railroad. And there is the Ship Chandler's Building (circa 1800) to recreate the marine warehouse and ships' stores. Castleton Jail (1890) contains a display of early stocks and pillories.

There is a great deal of agricultural history at Shelburne. One might begin with a visit to the country store, complete with barber shop and post office; or, if the traveler prefers, he can examine the tools of the smith and wheelwright in the blacksmith shop. A small rural home, the Little Stone Cottage (1840), is typical of its period and has been outfitted with cheese and butter-making utensils. The mammoth Horse-shoe Barn, built with 60-foot hand-hewn timbers in the shape of a horseshoe, shelters more than 200 coaches, sleighs, carriages, wagons and early fire-fighting equipment. Two adjacent buildings (the Barn Annex and the Red Shed) contain additional farm equipment, including harnesses and sad-



ENTRANCE TO THE SHELBURNE MUSEUM

This 168-foot covered bridge came originally from Cambridge, Vermont, where for a hundred years it spanned the Lamoille River. Note the separate footpath on the side.



SHAKER BUILDING

The Shakers erected this structure in 1834 at East Canterbury, New Hampshire. The 86-foot long building, which originally served as a horse stand shed, now houses a number of agricultural and handicraft exhibits.

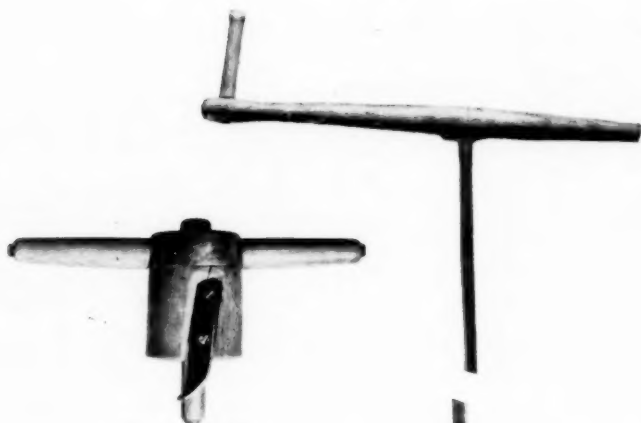
dles. At one end of the Red Shed, the Vermont Beekeeper's Association maintains a live bee exhibit.

The agricultural historian should be especially interested in the Shaker Building, shown above. The building is itself a marvel. The front supports are cut from granite, with each post weighing approximately two tons. The building houses a harness shop, a shoemaker's workroom, some early farm implements, a large variety of early household utensils and wrought iron items, and a display of weaving. The second and third floors hold perhaps the richest treasure of all—a collection of over 1600 hand woodworking tools of more than a century ago. Roughly 300 of these antiques, divided into 37 major categories, appear in an attractive pamphlet, "Woodworking Tools at Shelburne Museum" (Shelburne, Vt., 1957), by Frank H. Wildung. The catalog is, in a sense, a pictorial history of woodworking. It tells a reasonably complete story of how American pioneers built their houses, furniture, carriages, wagons and farm equipment.

Among this fascinating collection of woodworking tools is a set used for making

wooden water pipe. Wooden pipe or pump logs were in common use in the 19th century for carrying water from its source—usually a spring—into the home. As late as World War II, a Quebec craftsman turned out wooden pipe for sale during the critical shortage of metals. Supposedly, some pump logs are still used in certain Eastern cities. Yet, few readers would ever have seen either the pipe or the tools for fashioning the logs. For this reason, some of the essential tools and a length of pipe are pictured on the opposite page.

Shelburne Museum is "living history." Its founders were Mr. and Mrs. J. Watson Webb; its current director is Mr. Sterling D. Emerson. These people have, in the words of *Vermont Life*, provided "one of Vermont's finest attractions." In so doing, they have preserved some rare bits of early American history which fully merit the attention of the tourist in Vermont. *Agricultural History* is indebted to Mr. Gordon P. Manning, member of the Museum's Executive Staff, who so generously provided the materials and illustrations for this feature.—CCJ



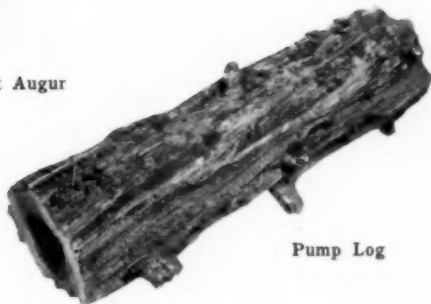
Tapering Tool



Pod Reamer



9-foot Augur

Augur shown
coming through log

Pump Log

TOOLS FOR MAKING WOODEN WATER PIPE

Pump logs were normally 8 feet long with varying diameters. They were drilled through the center with an augur and then tapered at one end and reamed at the other end. The tapered end of one log fitted into the reamed end of the next section. The pipe was laid underground where soaking provided water-tight joints. To prevent rotting, the logs were always cut green. Some of them remain in use after more than a hundred years of service.

The Persistence of Communal Tenure in French Agriculture*

FREDERIC O. SARGENT

The large number of land reform programs being carried on throughout the world has focused interest on the role of the peasant as a participant in the implementation of programs which vitally affect his interests. In France, the current land consolidation program which is proceeding at a relatively satisfactory pace draws heavily on the peasants for participation in key decisions, resolution of local problems and the administration of the program. The purpose of this paper is to explore the French peasant's experience in administration of community land use rights in an attempt to achieve a better understanding of his active role in present programs.

The method of exposition is a description of communal rights and conflicts over communal rights in various types of land beginning with the feudal period. The first section describes communal tenure in feudal France. The next two sections deal with the attempts to reduce and terminate communal rights and the peasants' equally persistent efforts to maintain those rights. The degree of success enjoyed by the peasants in this struggle is indicated in the fourth and concluding section on the extent of communal tenure in France today.

Communal Tenure in Feudal France. A discussion of peasant rights in land is presented in the framework of the *bundle of rights* concept of property. According to this concept, property in feudal France consisted of a collection of rights, which included the right to use, the right to alienate, the right to bequeath, and the right to rent. The right to use was subdivided further into the right to use various aspects of the land at different times for a variety of purposes. Some of the use rights were the right to cultivate, the right to glean, the right to graze, the right to cross over, the right to harvest wild fruits, the right to hunt or fish, and the right to use the annual increment of growth.¹

All of these rights were maintained or guaranteed by the sovereign power which reserved for itself the right of *eminent domain*, the right of *escheat* and the right to interpret and enforce the rules concerning all of the other rights.

For purpose of analysis, communal rights which existed in feudal land may be divided into the following classifications: (1) rights in arable land, (2) rights in forests, (3) rights in alpine pastures, and (4) the rights of the great-family or *communauté*.

Communal Rights in Arable Land. The principal communal use rights in arable land were those of *glanage*, *grapillage*, *ratelage*, *chaumage*, *vaine pâture*, and *droit de parcours*. The right of *glanage* or gleaning is one of the oldest of nonprivate rights in agricultural land. The first mention of it in France was in a royal edict of 561 A. D. Since that date it has been the subject of numerous ordinances up to recent times. *Glanage* consisted of the right of certain indigent persons to gather from the fields any grain that was left by the harvesters. According to common practice, which was codified by an edict of 1554, the privilege of gleaning was reserved for old people, amputees, small children and other persons who lacked the strength or faculty for regular work.² *Glanage* applied only to open fields. It was practiced between sunrise and sunset for two days after the completion of the harvest. Owners of the fields were not allowed to graze their own flocks until the gleaning period was over.³

* This paper is based on a study which was made under the supervision of Kenneth H. Parsons.

¹ Felicien Challaye, *Historie de la Propriété* (Paris, 1948), 36.

² *Larousse Agricole*, 1:757 (1921).

³ H. Watrin, *Code Rural et Droit Usuel* (Paris, 1903), 240, 241.

The rights of *grapillage* and *ratelage*⁴ were similar to *glanage*, but applied to other crops. *Grapillage* was the right to pick the grapes left on the vines by the grape pickers. *Ratelage* was the right to gather the hay that was missed in haying.

When the last head of grain had been gathered under the right of *glanage*, the people of the commune were allowed to cut the stubble which the harvesters left standing. This right was called *chaumage*. The straw was used to thatch cottage roofs or, in communities which lacked a common wood, it was used for fuel. The period of *chaumage* or stubble gathering was usually in the month of October—often between the first and the 20th. *Chaumage* was usually exercised concurrently with the right of *vaine pâture*.⁵

Vaine pâture was one of the most important of the community rights. It consisted of the right of the inhabitants of a commune to pasture their animals on land that was not enclosed, not in the process of production, nor prepared for planting. This included fallow land, natural prairies after the first haying, woods, and waste land. In some cases, this right was reserved for agricultural laborers who owned neither pasture nor arable land. In other cases, it was the privilege of all farmers who lived in the commune.

Vaine pâture, like other non-private rights, was not assignable nor transferable.⁶ This right was usually exercised by means of a single, community flock herded by the community shepherd. Participation in the community flock system was not compulsory. If any owner wished to herd his own flock he was free to do so. The number of animals that any owner was allowed to graze on the common pasture was determined by the extent of his holdings and the extent of his family responsibilities. The more land a man held, the more beasts he could pasture. The number of heads of livestock per unit of land varied according to local custom. In general, each family head residing in the commune was allowed to pasture six sheep and one cow with her calf if he owned no land at all. *Vaine pâture* was

practiced with slight variations in procedure in every region of France.

Vaine pâture under the *Ancien Régime* was the forerunner of local democratic administration. The salary of the communal herdsman was one of the few community responsibilities.⁷ As an institutional adjustment to the society of the domanial regime, *vaine pâture* was well suited to meet several definite needs. It freed the peasant and agricultural laborer from a part of the care of his livestock. It enabled peasants with very small holdings to enjoy the advantages of livestock raising. The large landowners, moreover, appreciated the free fertilizer which was distributed by the community flock.

Communal Rights in Forests. Forests were quite extensive in France in the Middle Ages and Renaissance periods.⁸ The rural economy was to a significant extent a forest economy. Settlements were almost invariably either bordered or surrounded by woods which provided for a large proportion of the peasant's needs. The peasant went into the woods to find the implements necessary for agriculture, including plow shares and spades, of which only the cutting edge was fashioned of iron. The woods provided him with vine props, fence posts, shingles, and shoes. He made most of the furniture and utensils for his home and kitchen from wood. Baskets, dishes, bowls, forks, spoons, and wine vessels were fashioned from wood. The peasant farmer also found a large part of his food in the forest. He gathered wild fruits, nuts, mushrooms, and honey, and hunted rabbits and other small game. His cows, sheep and goats found forage in the forest. He gathered dead wood for fuel according to the right of *affouage*. The forest also supplied materials for artisans and home industries,

⁴ Watrin, *Code Rural et Droit Usuel*, 220, *passim*.

⁵ Georges Lizerand, *Le Régime Rural de L' Ancienne France*, (Paris, 1942).

⁶ Roland Maspétiol, *L'Ordre Éternel des Champs* (Paris, 1956) 309, 229.

⁷ The other principal community endeavors consisted of maintaining the church and the presbytery.

⁸ Henri Sée, *Histoire Economique de la France* (Paris, 1948), 200, *passim*.

such as cork, charcoal, and lumber. The dependence of the peasants upon the woods for food, fuel, forage, tools and raw materials made the communal forest of paramount importance in the rural economy.⁹

It is not possible to describe communal rights in forests with the same detail and accuracy as is possible in the case of rights in arable land. The forest was considered to be an inexhaustible resource. Neither the ruling *seigneur* nor the peasant community saw any need to ration its many products. Since there was no dispute over forest products between ruler and ruled, there was no occasion for written records of agreements or of litigations. The principal administrative problem was for the head of the peasant commune (the mayor) to supervise the use of the forests according to common practice. This was accomplished without any reference to seigneurial courts and therefore without making any permanent records for historians.¹⁰

The community authorities permitted a fairly liberal use of the forest products since it seemed to them that in so doing they were consuming only the annual increment of their silvan capital. Hunting rights were not reserved for the *seigneurs* until quite late in the *Ancien Régime* and even then only large game was affected. Fishing remained generally free. The grazing of animals in the forest was not regulated until the 16th century when rules were established to permit small saplings to grow large enough to insure their continued growth in spite of grazing.

Communal Rights in Alpine Pastures. The importance of communal rights in alpine pastures in the 18th century is indicated by their extent. In 1738, the communal alpine holdings in the provinces of *Savoie*, *Maurienne*, and *Laurentaire* amounted to 350,927 hectares, or 56% of the total land area of those provinces. In other provinces the percentage of communal alpine pastures was smaller, but still quite significant.

The principal type of communal tenure in alpine pastures was known as the *albergement*, and two modifications of this in-

stitution were known as the *alpes de société* and the *alpes communal*. Under an *albergement*, the *seigneurs* ceded the use of certain land to the peasants in exchange for a nominal payment. The cessions were usually made in perpetuity. Sometimes a further annual payment (*cens* or *redevance*) was made in recognition of the fact that the *seigneur* reserved for himself the right of *domain direct*. During the middle ages, the *seigneurs* submitted the greater part of their mountain holdings to *albergement* agreements. These long-term leases, which were intermediary between sale and rent, were particularly advantageous to the *seigneurs*. They eliminated the necessity of constantly warding off invasions and usurpations of his domain by the peasants. Secondly, the *seigneurs'* holdings were usually so extensive that they could not utilize it fully with their own flocks.

The *alpes de société* had their origin in *albergements* which were made to several specifically designated individuals. The rights of the co-holders were hereditary and could be alienated. The right of each holder could also be subdivided. The unit of measurement was called *la vache* (a cow). It was subdivided into a *jambe de vache* (a cow's leg), which was one-fourth of the unit, and even into an *ongle* (a toe nail)—one eighth.

The communal use of pastures, like the communal use of forests and arable land, was always well-regulated by community custom. In general, participation in the use of alpine pastures was reserved for native family heads. Even the flocks of the local curate were not always accepted without a special agreement. The number of beasts that each person could pasture on the common alps was also regulated by community custom.

Rights Held by Great Family Units or Communautés. In the foregoing discussion, land use rights which were held and administered by the peasant community as a

⁹ Lizerand, *Le Régime Rural de L'Ancienne France*, 97-104.

¹⁰ Marc Bloch, *Les Caractères Originaux de L'Histoire Rurale Française* (Paris, 1931), 172 ff.

whole have been described. A smaller socioeconomic unit which held and used land in common, was the peasant "great-family" or *communauté*. The census unit in medieval Europe was the "hearth." This hearth was the center of life of either single family units such as the father, his wife, children and parents or of a larger unit—the great family—which included brothers, cousins, nephews and men who had married into the family.¹¹ This institution was the lineal descendant of the Roman *familia*. It was the irreducible social organization which functioned domestically, politically, economically and religiously to satisfy the needs of its members. Throughout the feudal period the great-families or *communautés* were not distinguished in records from a single family unit, hence it is not possible to learn how numerous they were or what areas of land they occupied. It is possible, however, to find sources which suggest that there were a large number of *communautés* and that they constituted one of the principal land-holding institutions of feudal France. The Guittard-Pinon *communauté*, which was finally dissolved in 1818, thrived for a period of more than a thousand years. The story of the origin of this *communauté* as it was told to each new generation of members gives a nice insight into the attitudes and concepts which provided the basis for these associations. This is the story which was handed down from father to son:

A long time ago, more than a thousand years, a farmer who was the father of a large family called all his children together and told them that they should never separate so that their land would not be divided. He said that they could be stronger and richer all together than if one took a blade of wheat and the other a fagot. They should eat their wheat together and burn their fagots together. They should give their word for themselves and for their children to obey these vows and to pass on the same advice he had given them. The Father died. The eldest son was elected to replace him, and their children and their children's children have followed this example. They have fought together, worked together, stored their hay in the same barn, piled their wood in one shed. They have been strong, and hospitable. They have done well and they will go to paradise.¹²

Pre-Revolutionary Clash Between Sei-

gneurs and Peasants over Communal Rights. As the economic value of forest holdings increased as a result of increased use of wood in commerce and manufacturing, the *seigneurs* and the king became covetous of the community rights in forests and devised various means for acquiring them.

The *seigneurs*, through their control of the seigneurial courts, sought to reduce peasant rights by making changes in the regulations which governed the use of the forests. Initially, several different techniques were employed to reduce peasant claims. One method was to forbid the peasants to help themselves and require the seigneurial forester to deliver each peasant's quota of wood. Another technique consisted of purchasing the rights of forest use from the peasants. Some *seigneurs* abolished all communal rights by assigning a small portion of the woods to each peasant for his exclusive use and retaining the rest for exclusive seigneurial use. The peasant was allowed to cut his parcel in its entirety except for a prescribed number of saplings which had to be left standing in each *arpent* (one arpent equals 50 *ares*. One *are* equals 100 square meters).

Gradually the various methods by which *seigneurs* increased their control over the use of forests and grazing land in their *chatellenie* were standardized and reduced to two principal processes—the *triage* and the *cantonnement*.¹³

Triage was applied to forests which had been ceded freely to the communes without any requirements for the payment of rent. In applying this procedure, the *seigneur* first reduced the area subject to common use and then freed the remaining portion from the law of servitude and so transformed it into a veritable private property.

The second common process of reducing peasant rights was called *cantonnement*.¹⁴ The *seigneur* applied this process when the

¹¹ See Jean Brissard, *History of French Private Law*. (Boston 1912).

¹² *Communautés et Associations Rurales* (Paris, 1949), 10.

¹³ Watrin, *Code Rural et Droit Usuel*, 517, 516.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 238, 516.

community had the right of use of common land but did not have a documented right of co-proprietorship. By *cantonement*, the *seigneur* retained a much larger portion of the land than was possible under *triage*. The *seigneur's* share was frequently as large as two-thirds of the disputed area. The area which the *seigneur* could claim was subject to the condition that the remaining land was sufficient to the needs of the peasants. Under this process, the peasants were obliged to continue to pay rent on that portion of their original holdings which was left under their control.

Modern French authorities on feudal law disagree as to the legality of this process. Arguments with internal logical consistency are presented by all of the disputants. The differences are in the basic assumption underlying the reasoning. Some hold that the *seigneur* did not relinquish all rights in ceding unencumbered use of the forests; others hold that the communes owned the forests as they had used it without let or hindrance for a long period of time. Lizerand, who is sympathetic to the peasant's point of view, advances strong arguments to show that *triage* lacked legal foundation and amounted to nothing more than an arbitrary usurpation.¹⁵ In discussing this question, it must be remembered that before the development of their market value, the forests were a free good and so the usual legal reasoning concerning their ownership is not really applicable. It is also pertinent that the right of *eminent domain* was always reserved by the sovereign power which guaranteed other property rights. It seems to the author that the *cantonement* was tantamount to the sovereign applying the right of *eminent domain* in order to acquire a newly created resource.

The French courts were quite embarrassed by the litigation precipitated by the *cantonement* procedures. In general, they adopted compromise solutions which were indefensible in legal theory, but which were effective in satisfying the litigants and resolving the dispute.

The struggle between the *seigneurs* and the peasants over communal rights in

forest land and in other types of land was so general and so politically important that the king was forced to enter the lists. He did this as a result of a number of motives. He was beseeched by the peasants, warned by the intendants, and courted by the *seigneurs*. He was also in need of tax money and desirous of asserting royal authority over too-powerful regional lords.¹⁶

The royal edicts concerning communal land demonstrate the great interest the crown had in this matter, as well as its lack of any continuous, consistent policy. In a declaration of April 27, 1567, Charles IX ordered the communal rights in the waste lands and pastures of Bretagne to be re-established to the condition which prevailed prior to 1566. Henry III, in 1579, first ordered information concerning all *seigneurs* who had appropriated communal land. After assembling the records, he proceeded to annul those acquisitions. Henry IV, by an edict of March, 1600, declared that the peasants could retake the communal lands which they had sold if they would reimburse the acquirers. Louis XIII forbade the *seigneurs* to usurp the communal land by an ordinance of January, 1625. Louis XIV ordered communes in Champagne to take up again communal usages which had been alienated in the preceding 20 years (Ordinance of June 22, 1656.) Most of these alienations had been acquiesced to by the community in an effort to pay taxes during bad crop years. Under Colbert's administration, an edict of April, 1667 suppressed the *triages* which had been made by the *seigneurs* after 1630 and prescribed that the *seigneurs* must present their titles for *triages* which had been made before that date. Two years later, however, a contrary edict was promulgated. The edict of water and forests of August, 1669 permitted *triage* under certain specified conditions. An edict of 1683 forbade inhabitants of communes to alienate their rights. But two other edicts of 1677 and

¹⁵ Lizerand, *Le Régime Rural de L'Ancienne France*, 137-142.

¹⁶ Bloch, *Les Caracteres Originaux de L'Histoire Rurale Française*, 202-213.

1702 confirmed previous illegal alienations providing the new proprietor turned over to the treasury one-sixth or one-eighth of the value of the property concerned.¹⁷

Post-Revolutionary Struggle Over Communal Rights. In an effort to continue the work begun by the *seigneurs* of the *Ancien Régime* and to free property from feudal restrictions, the National Assembly proceeded to liberate it from the remaining constraints of community rights. This matter was taken up at once by the Committee of Agriculture which proceeded to take action in spite of the strong peasant protests that were encountered. The poorer peasants demanded the maintenance of the rights of *vaine pâture*, *glanage* and *châumage*, where they were still in force, and the re-establishment of these rights where they had been usurped by the *seigneurs*. Peasant protests were so vigorous that the Committee of Agriculture was forced to move slowly. First it decreed (June, 1790) against the reinvocation of any communal rights which had been abandoned. A year later (June, 1791) it was ready to decree the establishment of freedom of cultivation and exploitation. This decree suppressed the constraints of the feudal regime of associated fields and compulsory crop rotations, and marks an important date in the development of French Agriculture. It made possible individual improvement in the crop rotations without the necessity of community action. This law proclaimed that the land was as free as the persons who inhabited it and gave the proprietors the right to plant what they wished, where they wished, and to store or sell as they saw fit.

Another law further extending the right of the proprietor was the decree of September 28—October 6, 1791 which proclaimed that "the right to close and to open one's land results essentially from the right of property and cannot be contested by any proprietor." This decree did, however, make some allowances for the continued practice of local customs and usages. It did not end the right of *vaine pâture* per se but it provided the conditions for its grad-

ual diminution through successive enclosures.¹⁸

The great diversity of conditions under which land was used led to extended arguments concerning the disposition of communal holdings. In some places the wealthier farmers opposed the sale of communal land as it provided them with necessary pasture, while in other areas the poorer peasants wanted the land divided so that they could cultivate their share of it. In still other districts the poorer peasants depended upon the communal land for pasture for their few beasts and wanted it held undivided, while the rich who were not dependent upon it wanted it put on the market. After considerable debate, the Legislative Assembly finally adopted the decree of August 14, 1792. The decree amounted to a statement of principle without force. It proclaimed that immediately after the year's harvest the communal lands and rights, aside from forest rights, would be divided among the citizens of each commune. This decree was not accompanied by any detailed statement of how it was to be carried out. After further debate, the law of June 10, 1793 supplied the method of administering the former law. Its application depended upon local option and its specifications were quite reasonable. In order to apply the law, it was necessary for one-third of the inhabitants of a commune of both sexes over 21 years of age to vote for it. If the law was invoked, then the common land was prorated among the inhabitants of all ages and both sexes. Non-resident proprietors were not allowed to participate in this division of the land. The lots acquired from this distribution remained alienable and free from liens except for the payment of public taxes for a period of 10 years. This law was not very widely used and where it was applied its results varied. In the Ardennes it was only favorable to the large land holders. In Aisene some of the laborers profited from it but

¹⁷ Lizerand, *Le Régime Rural de L'Ancienne France*, 141, 142.

¹⁸ Sée, *Histoire Economique de la France*, 396, *passim*.

the loss of pasture land led to a decline in the number of sheep raised. In Creuse the application of the law met vigorous and effective resistance. In Aude the application of the law led to attempts to cultivate very poor land which soon had to be abandoned.

The law of June 9, 1796 called for the suppression of the divisions of communal land and the law of May 21, 1797 forbade the further alienation of communal holdings.¹⁹

The laws regulating the disposal of communal land had engendered acrimonious debate and aroused deep passion, but their results were not of great significance. One reason for this was that much of the communal land which had survived the feudal reaction was submarginal in respect to immediate alternative uses.

The stiff resistance which the peasants offered to all Revolutionary attempts to abolish their time-honored practices won concessions in the form of laws prohibiting the further division of communal lands. The decrees of February 29, 1804 and October 31, 1804 forbade division and regulated the use of communal lands still in existence.

Beginning in 1830, the cultivation of idle communal land was again the subject of discussion and action. In 1836, the government studied the question and decided that the best disposition of this land would be to lease it. In *Sein-Inferieure*, the cultivation of *communaux* (common lands) was not undertaken in any appreciable degree until after 1840 and it did not become widespread until the second half of the 19th century.

In 1836-1838, the Chamber of Deputies also prepared a law to suppress the rights of *vaine pâture* and *parcours*. Once more, the objections from all those who benefited from these rights (both rich and poor) were so numerous that work on the proposed law had to be abandoned.

Communal forest rights also were under vigorous attack in the Post-Revolutionary Period. The *Code Forestier* of 1827 further limited traditional rights of forest use which had previously been attacked in 1823. The forests could not be "freed" by means

of a *cantonement* of all rights of the use of the woods. Other collective uses, such as pasturage, were made redeemable by a payment of money. An exception was made for the communes in which the exercise of *pasturage* had become an absolute necessity for the inhabitants of one or several communes (art. 642, *Code Forestier*).²⁰

The *communautés* also fared badly. They were outlawed in the Post-Revolutionary period. As a result, they came to light only when one was discovered and broken up through the application of the appropriate chapter of the *Code Civil*. One *communauté* remained in operation in spite of the *Code Civil* until 1925. At that time one of its members went to the city, heard of the law requiring the division of estates, and returned to force the division of his family's heritage in order to get his share of the property.

Communal Tenure in the Twentieth Century. The salient fact concerning communal rights is that, in spite of all the economic, legal and technological forces working toward their elimination, these rights and the concept which they represent have persisted to the present time. The census reports of 1863, 1929 and 1949 all bear witness to the extent of communal holdings which have been maintained into the twentieth century.

In 1863, 33 departments had at least 10% of their surface occupied by communal holdings. The department of *Hautes-Alpes*, which is entirely mountainous, led with 51%. Other percentages of communal land were: *Savoie*—42%; *Basses Alpes*—25%; *Haute Savoie*—24%; *Isere*—21%; *Alpes Maritimes*—17%; *Drome*—11%.

The Census of 1929 gives further evidence of the extent of communal holdings in relation to total land area and the holdings of other proprietors, as shown in Table 1.

The amount of land held by communes in 1929 was a tribute to the tenacity of the peasants in fighting to maintain their an-

¹⁹ Roland Maspétiol, *L'Ordre Éternel Des Champs* (Paris, 1956), 287.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 257-338.

TABLE 1
Ownership of French Agricultural Land, 1929
(in hectares)

Owner	Cultivated land, woods, forests, and lakes	Non- cultivated land
The State	1,463,151	202,989
Departments	32,440	13,455
Communes	3,030,319	1,642,513
Hospitals	229,090	37,430
Private persons	39,235,078	5,056,990
All other owners, societies, etc.	342,662	140,190
Total	44,332,740	7,093,567

Source: Census of 1929.

cient heritage. In spite of the repeated attempts to break up communal holdings, nearly 7% of all "cultivated land, woods, forests and lakes" was owned by communes in 1929, as well as over one-fifth of all non-cultivated land. A large part of the communal holdings today consist of small wood lots in the vicinity of the commune. These lots are managed jointly by the mayor of the commune and the Departmental representative of the Bureau of Water and Forests. One such forest visited by the author was well managed on a perpetual yield basis. Each year a portion of the standing timber is sold to a lumber company. The proceeds from the sale go to the commune's treasury, permitting a comparable reduction in local taxes.

The *Revue* of the *Ministère de L'Agriculture* of May, 1949 gives additional and more recent figures concerning the extent of communal holdings under the rubric "wood lots and forests," as indicated in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Ownership of Wood Lots and Forests, 1929

Owner	Area, Hectares	Percentage of Total
The State	1,538,628	14%
Departments	24,148	Less than 1%
Communes	2,426,347	22%
Individuals	7,021,345	63%
Total	11,010,368	100%

Source: *Revue de Ministère de L'Agriculture* (May, 1949), 91.

A small number of the *communautés* of the *Ancien Régime* survived in spite of the fact that they were outlawed by the *Code Civil*.²¹ In addition, peasants began to form new *communautés* under the cooperative laws almost as soon as they were forbidden by the *Code*.

The Post World War II period witnessed a renaissance of this form of organization and the establishment of at least a dozen new agricultural *communautés*. Interest in them was great enough to lead to a national convention made up of leaders of these groups, those who would like to establish such groups and other interested persons. The number of hectares held in common varies from 10½ for an orchard holding to over 400. The number of members varies from one family and two bachelors to 50 family heads. The reasons given for establishing *communautés* are as varied as the number of groups. It is interesting to note that the members of these groups generally differ in political beliefs and affiliations as well as in religious preference. The common interest which holds them together is a belief in the economic advantages of joint ownership.

Communal rights in arable land, however, were completely eliminated. The reasons for their elimination were largely technological. The advent of farm machinery, as well as the host of other agricultural developments, made it preferable for a farmer to have complete control over his land with the freedom to manage it as he wished. As technology developed, the number of alternative land use and farm management possibilities made exclusive rights in land necessary in order to permit each entrepreneur to make his own selection among alternatives and to obtain, if possible, the bonus due to good management.

The persistence of communal rights in forests and in alpine pastures and the resurgence of the agricultural *communautés* suggests two conclusions. One is that communal land tenure was a highly satisfactory land holding arrangement. The other is

²¹ *Communautés et Associations Rurales*. (Editions du S.C.I.R. 1949) See also *Code Civil*.

that the French peasants were skillful as well as tenacious in preserving and defending their interests against all forms of encroachment. In the course of administering communal rights, peasants developed considerable expertness in local administration. Without doubt, this ability of the peasants to manage their own local land-holding institutions is one of the principal contributing factors in the current successful French land consolidation program.²²

Other countries where agricultural devel-

opment programs are under consideration might well investigate the hypothesis that if the indigenous farmers have had experience in the administration of communal land-use institutions, they will be well equipped to assist in the administration of any program that touches on their interests.

²² For a discussion of the French land consolidation program see, Frederic O. Sargent, "Fragmentation of French Land: Its Nature, Extent and Causes," *Land Economics*, 28:218-229 (August, 1952).

THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE FARMER

The merchant or manufacturer may be robbed of the reward of his labor by changes in the foreign or domestic market, entirely beyond his control, and may wind up a year, in which he has done everything which intelligence and industry could do to insure success, not only without profit, but with an actual diminution of capital. The strong arm of mechanic industry may be enfeebled or paralyzed by the prostration of those manufacturing or commercial interests to whose existence it so essentially contributes, and on whom, in turn, it so essentially depends. But what has the industrious farmer to fear? His capital is invested in the solid ground; he draws on a fund which, from time immemorial, has never failed to honor all just demands. His profits may be diminished, indeed, but never wholly suspended; his success depends on no mere earthly guarantee, but on the assurance of that great and beneficent Being, who has declared that, while the earth endureth, seed-time and harvest shall not cease. (1855)

—*The (Old) Farmer's Almanack*

SPECIALIZATION

There was a time when each man had to make his own shoes, weave his own cloth, shoe his own horse, and hew out the frame of his own house. That time has passed, and it is well that it has; for we can get better work from those who give their whole time and thought to one thing. A mixed farming is the rule here in the East, and it is all well enough, and gives us the means of living; but it doesn't prove that it isn't a good plan to work up some one line of culture, and look to that as the money crop of the farm. It matters little what it may be, if it is the very thing that one can do best. It may be bees or poultry, milk or butter, small fruits or garden vegetables of some kind; or it may be hay, grass, or the raising of stock. Only let it be a product suited to the place, as well as the man. (1884)

—*The Old Farmer's Almanac Sampler*

Reuben F. Kolb: Agricultural Leader of the New South

WILLIAM WARREN ROGERS

Reuben Francis Kolb was one of a small group of men, who, in the decades after the Civil War, helped mitigate the irony of the term "New South." In the period from 1861 to 1884, cotton production in the South increased by 54.1 per cent over the ante-bellum period of 1841 to 1860,¹ and men like Kolb were rare who discerned that "We have endeavored as someone has expressed it, to improve on our old methods by building brick smoke-houses and barns."²

Much has been written concerning Kolb's role as the political leader of the Populist movement during the decade of the 1890's,³ but his more important work came as an agricultural leader, who, by his own personal example and as commissioner of agriculture, was responsible for a significant movement toward diversified and scientific agriculture.

Kolb was born April 15, 1839, at Eufaula, Alabama. His great grandfather Kolb, a German immigrant, served as a major in the revolutionary army and was killed by British troops on the Pedee River in South Carolina. His grandparents were from Cheraw, South Carolina, and Eufaula, and his father ran a general merchandise and

cotton commission business in Eufaula and Apalachicola, Florida. Kolb's mother, a member of the Shorter family, prominent in Eufaula and surrounding Barbour County, died when he was only three weeks old and his father died when Kolb was a small boy. As a result, young Kolb was reared by his grandfather, Reuben C. Shorter.⁴

Eufaula is situated on a high bluff overlooking the Chattahoochee River, and here Kolb grew up and attended the public schools. Kolb attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and graduated in June, 1859.⁵ He returned to Eufaula and a large plantation which he had inherited and took up the pleasant life of planter and merchant. In early 1860, he married Mary Caledonia Cargile, a famous beauty of South Alabama.⁶

Kolb had followed a not uncommon pattern of the old South, and fell easily and naturally into a tradition of graceful liv-



Reuben F. Kolb

¹ *Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture for the Year 1884* (Washington, D. C., 1884), 487-488. These figures represent total production in the United States, but only a small amount of cotton was grown outside of the South.

² *Second Semi-Annual Session of the Alabama State Agricultural Society*, (February, 1887), 52. Hereinafter cited as *Annual Session*, with appropriate dates.

³ See Charles Grayson Summersell, "A Life of Reuben F. Kolb," Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Alabama, 1930; and "The Alabama Governor's Race in 1892," *The Alabama Review*, 8: 5-35 (January, 1955); John Sparkman, "The Kolb-Oates Election," Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Alabama, 1924; John B. Clark, *Populism in Alabama* (Auburn, 1927).

⁴ Thomas M. Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, (Chicago, 1921), 3: 992. Ruth Stodghill Cammack, "Reuben Francis Kolb: His Influence On Agriculture in Alabama," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Alabama Polytechnic Institute, 1941, 1-2. See also Kolb Biographical Folder at the Alabama Archives and History Building, Montgomery, Alabama.

⁵ Author's interview with Mrs. Ruby Richardson Hume (granddaughter of Kolb), Montgomery, July 25, 1957; Daniel Lindsey Grant, Editor, *Alumni History of the University of North Carolina* (Durham, 1924), 347.

⁶ Cammack, "Reuben Francis Kolb," 2.

ing, culture and education. When the Civil War came, Kolb enlisted in the Eufaula Rifles, marched at the inauguration of Jefferson Davis in Montgomery, rose from sergeant to captain and commanded with considerable distinction Kolb's Battery in the last years of the war.⁷

He returned, as did countless other Southerners, to find his fortunes wrecked by the war. During the reconstruction period he formed a partnership with two friends and began operating a grocery store. Failing this, for a brief time Kolb managed an opera house in Eufaula,⁸ and at one time was an unsuccessful candidate for postmaster.⁹

But Kolb was bound philosophically and traditionally to the soil and by 1869 he was conducting experiments with cotton. This was done in patches of from one to five acres in an attempt to determine the best possible seed and fertilizer.¹⁰ For Kolb the denouement with raising cotton came early. In a lucid analysis of his times, Kolb reasoned, with considerable justification, that Alabama's ante-bellum society, based on slavery and cotton, had been merely a facade. The lands were still rich and the mobile population had moved on once the soil was depleted. Thus, "Our true condition was concealed, covered over by the semblance of prosperity. It would have required but a few years longer in the ordinary course to have dissipated the idea that our prosperity was substantial and enduring."¹¹ But the war brought about the revelation in a cataclysmic manner. The desperate need for capital, however, and the high price of cotton after the war caused the South to fall back on its singular dedication to cotton. The adjustment of prices and the grim realities of the depression of the 1870's came too late to prevent the South from growing cotton to the exclusion of other crops or from installing the crop lien and farm tenant systems as a frequently more insidious substitute for slavery. Kolb did not condemn the existing situation, but he refused to accept its inevitability. Why not reduce cotton acreage and diversify? Why not accept new methods of farming and new equipment?

"It is all folly," he said, "for us to attempt to abolish the threshing machine and best out the wheat with a flail. You might as well attempt to abolish the cotton gin and pick out the seed with your fingers."¹²

Kolb's views toward Southern agriculture were hardly unique, although they were by no means commonly held. Newspapers and agricultural journals issued countless editorials against the undeviating culture of cotton. Kolb was in a position to dramatize personally the efficacy of his doctrine, however, and in a move rare for the time, proceeded to do so. Visual proof in this instance was of greater value toward promoting scientific agriculture than panegyrics from politicians or editorials from non-farmer newspapermen.

On the sandy loam soil of his farm just outside of Eufaula, Kolb began exploring the possibilities of fruit growing and truck farming. By 1881, after careful nurturing, the peach trees Kolb had planted bore sufficiently to warrant his shipping some to northern markets at Cincinnati and New York.¹³ He received good prices and by 1883, with a peach orchard of 2,000 trees, Kolb happily concluded, "There is money in peaches."¹⁴ He began to experiment with Le Conte pear trees. He soon had 12 acres devoted to his pears and, in addition, had 20,000 cuttings which were sold when one year old.¹⁵ Kolb later expanded his interest in the Le Conte pear by entering into a partnership with a farmer of Escam-

⁷ John W. DuBose, "Kolb's Battery," Unpublished Manuscript in the Military Records Division, Alabama Archives and History Building; Willis Brewer, *Alabama: Her History, War Record, and Public Men* (Montgomery, 1872), 703-704.

⁸ *Bluff City Times* (Eufaula), December 14, 1871.

⁹ *Eufaula Weekly Times and News*, February 3, 1885.

¹⁰ *Bluff City Times*, July 22, 1869.

¹¹ *Second Semi-Annual Session* (February, 1887), 52.

¹² *Ibid.*, 54.

¹³ *Eufaula Weekly Bulletin*, June 4, 1881.

¹⁴ *Southern Cultivator and Dixie Farmer*, 41:2 (May, 1883). The peach trees were planted at uniform distances apart; the land between them was periodically plowed; and the trees were regularly wormed and washed.

¹⁵ *Southern Cultivator*, 43: 486 (December, 1885)

bia County to plant 10,000 trees on 250 acres of land.¹⁶ Located in Southwest Alabama, Escambia County had excellent soil for fruit trees.

Kolb's property was described as "the most remarkable farm in Alabama, as it is doubtless the most unique in the South."¹⁷ He increased the size and variety of his crops annually. In 1882, he had a four-acre field of collard greens from which he filled a standing order from a seed company for 500 pounds of seed. After gathering seven acres planted in Irish potatoes, Kolb planted sweet potatoes on the same land. An acre of sugar cane netted him \$175 and 10,000 stalks for bedding purposes. On still another acre of land Kolb planted 70,000 onion sets. On one four-acre plot he produced 240 bushels of oats for the first crop, \$205 worth watermelons as the second crop and \$40 worth of peas as the third.¹⁸ By 1885, he cultivated his crop with eight mules and had 100 acres in cotton, 50 acres in oats, 40 acres in corn and two acres in cantaloupes.¹⁹ In 1888, he was supplying seed houses with squash and cucumber seed.²⁰

Kolb won his greatest fame, however, as "the champion water melon [*sic*] raiser of the South . . .,"²¹ whose farm had "the largest watermelon patch on the two continents."²² Kolb first began selling watermelons on the streets of Eufaula in 1881.²³ These first watermelons were of the Georgia Rattlesnake variety and soon Kolb was advertising pear trees and watermelon seed for sale.²⁴ He developed a watermelon which he named the "Kolb Gem," and which became the most widely heralded melon in the country. The *Atlanta Constitution* claimed the watermelon was of Georgia lineage. In a patch of Scaly Bark and Georgia Rattlesnake watermelons growing side by side Kolb noticed a vine on which the hybrid was so marked that he pulled the two finest melons and stored them away. Several weeks later he came across the melons again and discovered them to be as sound as when he first cut them. These melons and the seed from them began the "Kolb Gem" strain. The *Constitution* commented, "The Georgia watermelon may yet

make a governor for Alabama of Commissioner Kolb. . . ."²⁵ Originally Kolb had planted 20 acres in watermelons, an amount of land excessively large for such a risk. But his success was so phenomenal that he increased his acreage, which in turn sent his production to geometrical increases. Ultimately, Kolb had 200 acres devoted to watermelons and by 1889 was producing 200,000 melons annually for seed.²⁶

Kolb explored all of the commercial possibilities of the watermelon. He produced 700 to 800 shipping melons per acre. Then he sorted with the 35- to 50-pound melons being sent to Boston and points East; the 25- to 35-pound melons were consigned to the western markets; and the 15- to 25-pound melons wound up at New Orleans.²⁷ He sold the watermelons to produce commission houses that wholesaled them in carload lots. As the season advanced the prices received became progressively lower.²⁸ According to Kolb, Boston was a watermelon-fancying town and the proper Bostonians were quite addicted to the qualities of the "Kolb Gem" watermelon.²⁹ Kolb won from the railroad commissioner of Alabama a decision lowering the rates on shipping watermelons from Eufaula to Birmingham.³⁰

There was a considerable local market for the watermelons. Kolb sold 2,000 melons

¹⁶ *The Standard Gauge* (Brewton), November 15, 1888. Although Kolb had lessened his farming practices in order to attend to his duties as commissioner of agriculture, he still had this orchard in 1890, *ibid.*, May 15, 1890.

¹⁷ *Southern Cultivator*, 43: 486 (December, 1855) (May, 1883)

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Southern Cultivator*, 43: 486 (December 1885)

²⁰ *Second Semi-Annual Session* (February, 1887), 54.

²¹ *Union Springs Herald*, September 13, 1882.

²² *Montgomery Advertiser*, May 13, 1884.

²³ *Eufaula Weekly Bulletin*, July 2, 1881.

²⁴ *Eufaula Times and News*, October 3, 1882.

²⁵ Quoted in *The Troy Enquirer*, March 30, 1889.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Second Annual Session* (August, 1885), 138-140.

²⁸ *The Troy Enquirer*, quoted in *Union Springs Herald*, February 14, 1883.

²⁹ *Eufaula Times and News*, July 31, 1883.

³⁰ *Montgomery Advertiser*, June 14, 1893.

in Eufaula in 1885,³¹ and the supreme and inevitable accolade came when some neighboring boys invaded Kolb's patch, stole a dozen or so melons and hauled them off in a wagon to sell in Eufaula.³² The watermelon seeds were more profitable to Kolb than the melons themselves. He was so swamped with orders for seed that he could scarcely meet the demand. Melons not shipped, sold locally or used for seed were used for hog and cattle feed.³³ There were different claims forwarded as to the financial returns Kolb enjoyed, but he maintained that he cleared 10 cents per melon and had never sold less than \$75 worth of melons from an acre.³⁴ In 1883 Kolb said, "My 150 acres of melons this year will clear me more money than any 500 acres of cotton will pay in the state of Alabama, and you may select the very best 500 acres."³⁵

The "Kolb Gem" won instant favor because of its shipping qualities. Oval shaped and of a convenient size, the melon kept fresh for a long period of time because the rind was firmer and tougher than other varieties.³⁶ Seed catalogues and agricultural journals of the time were filled with advertisements of the "Kolb Gem,"³⁷ and the melon was used by seedmen to cross with other varieties.³⁸ The watermelon was also noted for its flavor.

Kolb's farming operations were so unusual that visitors chronicled their observations with the full expectation that no one would believe them. A classmate of Kolb's at the University of North Carolina visited him and then returned to his home at Six Mile, Alabama, with the statement, "We hope our Bibb [County] friends will not accuse us of romancing when we tell we saw his . . . water-melon patch and . . . peach orchard."³⁹ One paper could scarcely comprehend "the immense amount of melons that will be produced on that patch."⁴⁰ Another said, "it will be well to examine figures given by the greatest farmer in Alabama, and it will be better to learn some lessons from his example."⁴¹

Kolb, of course, encountered the perils attendant to any kind of agricultural undertaking. In fact, as far as labor was concerned, truck and fruit farming were con-

siderably more demanding than row farming. His crops were extremely sensitive to weather conditions, and a cold snap in April, 1885 caused \$1,500 damage to his peach and pear crops.⁴² But by practicing crop rotation, proper fertilizing and other scientific methods, Kolb made his farm pay. He employed day labor exclusively and paid his hands off every Saturday at the rate of fifty cents a day, "save in exceptional cases when as much as sixty cents [was] allowed." Since Kolb issued no rations, his workers had to provide their own food.⁴³ Kolb's achievements were valuable for the rest of the state. "He has," wrote one paper, "won success in his chosen calling by planting little cotton. If our people generally are to make a success of agriculture isn't Capt. Kolb's the only way?"⁴⁴

Kolb took a natural interest in organizing and promoting agricultural organizations. He was a member of the Grange,⁴⁵ and when that organization declined he became active in the Barbour County Agricultural Association, organized in 1884. Hiram Hawkins, an outstanding agriculturalist and later Kolb's chief rival for commissioner of agriculture, was made president and Kolb secretary. The organization had an elaborate constitution and was an ac-

³¹ *Southern Cultivator*, 43: 86 (December, 1883).

³² *Eufaula Weekly Times and News*, July 1, 1884.

³³ *Second Annual Session* (August, 1885), 140.

³⁴ *The Troy Enquirer*, quoted in *Union Springs Herald*, February 14, 1883.

³⁵ *Ibid.* One farmer wrote that Kolb's claims were "not more than any farmer deserves . . . but I fear it is more than any may reasonably hope to attain." *Southern Cultivator and Dixie Farmer*, 41: 8 (July 1883).

³⁶ *Albany (Georgia) News and Advertiser*, quoted in *Eufaula Weekly Times and News*, January 20, 1885.

³⁷ See *Southern Cultivator*, 46:210 (May, 1888) XLVII 47: 105.

³⁸ *Southern Cultivator*, 49: 161 (March, 1891).

³⁹ *Bibb Blade*, May 4, 1882.

⁴⁰ *The Moulton Advertiser*, February 22, 1883.

⁴¹ *The West Alabamian* (Carrollton), March 28, 1883.

⁴² *Bibb Blade*, April 8, 1885.

⁴³ *Southern Cultivator*, 43: 486 (December, 1885).

⁴⁴ *Eufaula Weekly Times and News*, November 25, 1886.

⁴⁵ Cammack, "Reuben Francis Kolb," 36.

tive, effective group.⁴⁶ Kolb displayed his farm products in fairs and at the East Alabama Fair Association's Second Annual Fair held at Eufaula in 1884, he was awarded premiums in 12 events, while his wife's culinary feats, which approached the status of legend, received recognition also.⁴⁷

Kolb strongly supported the Agricultural and Mechanical College at Auburn, and in 1886 he was appointed a member of the board of trustees.⁴⁸ When the Alabama State Agricultural Society was formed, Kolb took an active part in its activities and became general superintendent of the society's state fair which was held at Montgomery in 1886.⁴⁹ One paper credited the success of the fair to Kolb's indefatigable efforts.⁵⁰ His success as a farmer and agricultural leader led to his election in 1887 as president of the National Farmers' Congress at Chicago.⁵¹ The Congress had been organized in Atlanta in 1875 and owed its inspiration and well-being to Robert Beverly of Virginia.⁵² Meeting at Montgomery in 1889, the Congress reelected Kolb president, although the society did not win the approval of the staunchly Democratic press when it failed to reach a decision as to whether it favored a high or a low tariff.⁵³

Alabama was one of the last Southern states to establish a department of agriculture, but pressure from a phalanx of agriculturalists like Kolb and adroit maneuvering on the part of Hawkins as chairman of the house committee on agriculture in the state legislature, resulted in the passage of an act creating the department. The bill became law in February 1883 and went into effect in September.⁵⁴ "Thus," as Kolb later said, "the department was launched into existence, without money, and without any friends, in all this great commonwealth, except a few leading agriculturalists, who had given their influence, and support to the passage of the law creating the department."⁵⁵

The act provided for the establishment of the department at Auburn, and almost immediately candidates applied for the commissionership. Charles C. Langdon of Mobile, an outstanding agricultural journalist whose age forced

him to be a bystander in the race, wryly commented to Governor Edward A. O'Neal that there was no dearth of "patriots desirous of serving the State in the capacity of Commissioner of Agriculture. . . ."⁵⁶ The Alabama law, which had been modeled on that of Georgia,⁵⁷ made the office appointive for terms of two years.

Hawkins and Kolb were the leading candidates for the appointment. Hawkins was soon eliminated because of a constitutional provision forbidding any legislator from filling an office which he had created. Later, charges were made that Hawkins was unaware of this clause and had tailored the bill for the express purpose of having himself made commissioner. Hawkins adamantly denied these assertions.⁵⁸ Other can-

⁴⁶ *Eufaula Weekly Times and News*, February 12, 1884. After Kolb became agriculture commissioner, he resigned the secretaryship but remained a member of the society, *ibid.*, July 20, 1887.

⁴⁷ Kolb's awards included: best five acres of corn; best acre of corn; best bushel of bread corn; best bushel stock corn; best bushel seed oats; best bushel feed oats; best bushel rye; best bushel field peas; best bale of hay, native grass; best and largest display of farm products; and best selection of fruit trees. Mrs. Kolb displayed silver, spice, pound, fruit and sponge cakes; crackers; biscuits; light rolls; corn cakes, and plantation corn dodgers, *Eufaula Weekly Times and News*, November 25, 1884. She won first place premiums for her scuppernong wine and peach jelly, *ibid.*, December 2, 1884.

⁴⁸ *Union Springs Herald*, July 7, 1886.

⁴⁹ *Third Annual Session* (August, 1886), 39-40; *Montgomery Advertiser*, October 7, 1886.

⁵⁰ *Shelby Sentinel*, quoted in *Eufaula Weekly Times and News*.

⁵¹ *Russell Register*, November 19, 1887; *Southern Cultivator*, 45: 564 (December, 1887).

⁵² N. A. Dunning, Editor, *The Farmers' Alliance History and Agricultural Digest* (Washington, D. C., 1891), 298-300.

⁵³ *Montgomery Advertiser*, November 21, 1889; *Alliance Journal* (Montgomery), December, 1889, 16-17.

⁵⁴ *Acts of the Alabama General Assembly, 1882-1883*, 190-197. Hereinafter cited as *Acts*.

⁵⁵ *Montgomery Advertiser*, January 27, 1888.

⁵⁶ C. C. Langdon to Edward A. O'Neal, March 2, 1883, Edward A. O'Neal Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

⁵⁷ *Union Springs Herald*, January 24, 1882.

⁵⁸ *Eufaula Weekly Times and News*, May 6, 13, 20 and April 29, 1884.

didates for the position, while receiving local support, were not widely known throughout the state. Kolb was easily the leading contender, with support from practically all of the East and Southeast Alabama newspapers and scattered backing throughout the state.⁵⁹

But when the appointment was announced, the man named was Edward Chambers Betts, a Huntsville lawyer and entrepreneur farmer.⁶⁰ Doubt was immediately raised as to Bett's knowledge of farming,⁶¹ and charges were made that his only claim to the job was that he came from North Alabama.⁶² When Betts first arrived at Auburn he made a good impression,⁶³ but he and his chief clerk, Charles Gachet of Auburn, were soon immersed in controversy and never managed to gain the confidence of the farmers. Betts did not offer aggressive leadership, but he was severely handicapped. He had no funds to run the machinery of the department and had no acts of a former administration to guide him.⁶⁴ For these reasons, Governor O'Neal believed the department had not realized "the too sanguine expectations of some of its friends."⁶⁵

The dissatisfaction with Betts prompted officials of the State Agricultural Society to protest to the governor against the commissioner's reappointment.⁶⁶ Betts felt that he was being persecuted,⁶⁷ and at one time tried to locate a second for a duel he proposed to fight against certain parties who had accused him of drunkenness.⁶⁸ In 1885, however, Betts was reappointed, although the action was not heralded by the state press as a significant event. Actually, Betts performed fairly competently in setting in motion the various activities of the department. But he was in ill health and the criticism to which he was subjected did not make him enthusiastic for the job, so although his second appointment ran until September 1887, he resigned in early June of that year.⁶⁹ This move had been anticipated several months previously and once again many men attempted to secure the appointment. As before, the leading candidates were Kolb and Hawkins.⁷⁰

As a legitimate applicant, Hawkins re-

ceived some newspaper support, but his chief backer was the State Grange. The Grange itself was a weak body but its endorsement still carried considerable weight.⁷¹ The Barbour County Agricultural Club also supported Hawkins rather than Kolb.⁷² Solidifying his former support, Kolb had greatly expanded his strength and was endorsed by the *New South* in Birmingham, the *Mobile Register*, *Birmingham Age*, *Montgomery Dispatch*, *Shelby Sentinel*, and *Hayneville True Citizen*.⁷³ In addition to newspaper support, Kolb had the endorsement of agricultural clubs all over the state,⁷⁴ and privately claimed that the supposedly non-partisan State Agriculture Society's executive committee and president had written him letters of recommendation.⁷⁵ Thus there was

⁵⁹ Kolb was first endorsed by the *Union Springs Herald* with the *Eufaula Times* and *Eufaula Bulletin* quickly agreeing, *Union Springs Herald*, January 3, 10, 1883. Others were: *The Troy Enquirer*, *The Elba Times*, *The Opelika Times*, *The Troy Messenger*, *Clayton Courier*, *Tuskegee News* and *The Moulton Advertiser*.

⁶⁰ Betts Biographical Folder, Alabama Archives and History Building; Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, 3: 141.

⁶¹ *Union Springs Herald*, September 26, 1883.

⁶² There was a traditional rivalry in Alabama between the North and South politicians. Betts was defended, not unnaturally, by two North Alabama newspapers, *Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, September 5, 19, 26, 1883; and *Coosa River News* (Centre), September 14, 1883.

⁶³ *Montgomery Advertiser*, September 23, 1883.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, January 27, 1888.

⁶⁵ *Governors Messages, 1843-1886, Alabama Official Documents*, (Montgomery, 1886), 1: 13.

⁶⁶ Hiram Hawkins to Robert McKee, August 10, 1885, Robert McKee Papers, Alabama Archives and History Building.

⁶⁷ E. C. Betts to Edward A. O'Neal, September 21, 1885, O'Neal Papers.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, September 25, 1885.

⁶⁹ *Fourth Annual Session* (August, 1887), 18.

⁷⁰ *Eufaula Weekly Times and News*, June 9, 1887.

⁷¹ *Clarke County Democrat*, January 13, 1887.

⁷² *Eufaula Weekly Times and News*, January 27, 1887.

⁷³ *Union Springs Herald*, December 1, 22, 1886.

⁷⁴ *The Troy Enquirer*, January 29, 1887; *Union Springs Herald*, January 12, 1887.

⁷⁵ Reuben F. Kolb to William LeRoy Broun, January 6, 1887, William LeRoy Broun Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.

little surprise when Governor Thomas Seay appointed Kolb commissioner on July 6, 1887, to fill out Betts' unexpired term; in early September Kolb was appointed for a full two year term.⁷⁶ He asked for forbearance and told the Agricultural Society members to "remember that I am a new horse in the harness, and it will require time and much labor to perform these duties."⁷⁷

The duties of the commissioner were myriad, and Kolb entered into his work vigorously. Certain functions of the department were impersonal. The state experiment farm was originally established at Auburn, and while Kolb was commissioner several more were established at strategic localities throughout the state. Agricultural schools were later attached to the stations and became an integral part of the state's education program. Kolb was an able administrator and promoted this program. The State Agricultural Society was an adjunct to the department, and here again Kolb was able to secure for the society appropriations from the legislature. The numerous agricultural bulletins and crop reports published monthly by the department were informative and written in a plain non-scientific style. Kolb's greatest contribution, however, lay in areas of the department's activities where he could exercise his personal leadership and initiative.

In 1889, the state legislature passed an act authorizing the commissioner to hold farmer's institutes throughout the state. Lecturers were employed and paid by the department.⁷⁸ Kolb approved of the act because many farmers could not go to school and "the only alternative is to carry the school to them."⁷⁹ Kolb employed as lecturers officials of the state experiment station at Auburn and prominent members of the Farmers' Alliance, an organization that was becoming increasingly important in the state.

The institutes were held in late summer because this was the most convenient time for both the farmers and the officials of the experiment station. At the meetings the usual pattern was to hold three sessions: morning, afternoon and night. When the

institute opened, a presiding officer and secretary were elected from the assembled audience. Lectures by the commissioner, members of his office and of the experiment station were then delivered. After this the floor was thrown open for discussion with the farmers being encouraged to ask questions concerning any matter of interest to them.⁸⁰ The pleasures of the day were usually heightened by a barbecue.

As conducted by Kolb, the farmers' institutes soon were charged with being nothing more than state-sponsored political rallies to elect Kolb governor.⁸¹ There was a certain amount of validity to these charges. At Dillburgh in Pickens County, a hostile reporter was present at an institute where Kolb spoke. Conceding Kolb easy grace, good looks, and excellent oratorical ability, the reporter added that the commissioner was the "shrewdest electioneer on the hill and never loses an opportunity to get in a word for No. 1. . . ." ⁸² The effectiveness of the farmers' institutes was certainly lessened by the political charges. At Centreville the *Bibb Blade* commented, "As a failure, the Farmers Institute held by Mr. Kolb . . . was a success." ⁸³

Finally Governor Thomas G. Jones, who was not sympathetic either to Kolb or the farmers' institutes, in his 1892 message to the legislature recommended a law which would withhold payment of the expenses of an institute until the conductor had produced an affidavit to the effect that the speeches had been confined to the subjects permitted by the law, that is "difussing [sic] among the farmers of the State useful and practical knowledge relative to agricul-

⁷⁶ *Montgomery Advertiser*, July 7, September 2, 1887.

⁷⁷ *Fourth Annual Session* (August, 1887), 18.

⁷⁸ *Acts*, 1888-1889, 669-670.

⁷⁹ *Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture of the State of Alabama*, 1890 (Montgomery, 1890), 10. Hereinafter cited as *Commissioner's Report*.

⁸⁰ Oron Percy South, "Agricultural Organizations in Alabama from 1872-1907," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Alabama Polytechnic Institute, 1940.

⁸¹ *Tuscaloosa Gazette*, quoted in *Bibb Blade*, July 24, 1891.

⁸² *The West Alabamian*, July 1, 1891.

⁸³ *Bibb Blade*, August 28, 1891.

ture. . . . Any violation of this proposed law would be an impeachable offense in the case of the commissioner and a misdemeanor on the part of the lecturers.⁸⁴ However, the suggestion was never enacted into legislation.

If the institutes were politically slanted, they were also educational. Kolb was a good drawing card and the institutes were well attended. He conducted them as rallies rather than stilted formal meetings. There was, however, no denying the statement made by A. B. Brassell, one of the institute lecturers, who asserted that the institutes were "the best, cheapest and most powerful means of electioneering for office that ever existed in the world, and to say that men will rise above such methods to obtain office is nonsense, in this period of competition."⁸⁵ There were so many charges against Kolb for playing politics that when he spoke he devoted half of his time to scientific agriculture and the other half to denying the allegations aimed at him.⁸⁶ His most implacable foe was the *Montgomery Advertiser*, self-appointed defender of Bourbon Democracy. W. W. Screws, the able and vitriolic editor of the *Advertiser*, objected strongly to Kolb's using state money to promote his political advancement. Kolb's successors carefully avoided politics at the institutes and their annual reports carefully noted this avoidance.⁸⁷ After the mid-1890's, the experiment station at Auburn took an increasingly active part in conducting the institutes. They were of great benefit to the state, and the farm demonstration work now carried out by the state and federal governments is in reality an extension of these farmers' institutes.⁸⁸

No sooner had the Civil War ended than proposals offering a solution to the labor problem in Alabama in the form of immigrants began to inundate the state press and other mediums of public communication. Ranging from the ridiculous to the faintly logical, these suggestions all ended in failure. Under Kolb's leadership the agriculture department became the chief agency for promoting immigration. He developed a plan of visiting the Northwest

and by way of personal propaganda, persuading the people to come and share Alabama's resources. He wanted to encourage immigration "till every hill be a vineyard and every valley a farm, every plane (sic) a factory and every mountain a furnace."⁸⁹ Of course this was to be done, as he said, with "hard, honest farmers and capitalists of the northwest. . . ." ⁹⁰ He undertook his first trip in the spring of 1888, and, armed with promotional literature, numerous newspapers and confidence in his ability to "sell" Alabama "to the frozen denizens of the North . . .," ⁹¹ Kolb made an excellent advertisement for the state. An Alabama newspaper commented on his stop in Oshkosh saying, "Don't be frightened children. 'Oshkosh' is only a small town in Wisconsin."⁹² Kolb carefully explained to Northern questioners that he believed the slavery question had been rightly settled and that no intelligent Southerner wanted to return to the system.⁹³ He returned in triumph and immediately began to plan a more elaborate invasion.

Kolb made his second trip to the Northwest in the fall and was accompanied by agricultural leaders from each section of the state.⁹⁴ Different cities published special newspaper editions for their representatives to distribute.⁹⁵ Officials of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad supplied free of charge a railroad car with sleeping and

⁸⁴ *Journal of the Alabama House of Representatives*, 1892-1893, 31-32. Hereinafter cited as *House Journal*. South, "Agricultural Organizations in Alabama from 1872-1907," 82.

⁸⁵ *Montgomery Advertiser*, August 16, 1890.

⁸⁶ See *Union Springs Herald*, April 9, 1890, for a detailed description of a political-educational institute conducted by Kolb for the Bug Hall Alliance at Mt. Hilliard in Bullock County.

⁸⁷ *Commissioner's Report*, 1892, 11; 1893, 11.

⁸⁸ South, "Agricultural Organizations" in Alabama from 1872-1907, 87-93.

⁸⁹ *Bibb Blade*, May 10, 1888.

⁹⁰ *Union Springs Herald*, January 30, 1889.

⁹¹ *Bullock County Reporter*, March 2, 1888.

⁹² *Eufaula Weekly Times and News*, April 5, 1888.

⁹³ *Oshkosh Times*, quoted in *ibid*.

⁹⁴ Reuben F. Kolb to R. D. Berry, July 21, 1888, *Agriculture Department Letter Book 197*; *The Opelika Democrat*, June 21, 1888.

⁹⁵ *The Standard Gauge*, August 2, 1888.

cooking accommodations and a car to contain the exhibits of the state. In addition, the company furnished free transportation.⁹⁶ Called "Alabama on Wheels," the car was heralded as an inspired idea. The car was painted yellow and had the words "Alabama's Matchless Resources" painted on each side, and at each end of the car on both sides were the words "Agriculture, Mineral, Woods." Kolb solicited contributions from every section and managed to collect an impressive group of minerals, agricultural products and manufactured items they were representative of the state.⁹⁷

The itinerary of "Alabama on Wheels" included stops in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio.⁹⁸ In all, Kolb distributed 30,000,000 pages of printed matter and an estimated 250,000 passed through the car.⁹⁹ The Alabamians were well received and the members of the entourage passed resolutions recommending Kolb for national secretary of agriculture, a suggestion promptly seconded by newspapers throughout the state.¹⁰⁰ There were, however, no immediate results of the trip. By this time Kolb was the acknowledged champion of the Farmers' Alliance and the denounced enemy of the Bourbon press. His trip was attacked as being of no practical value. One paper commented that until the immigrants could be seen and the capitalists' money counted, "we look upon 'Alabama on Wheels' as a gigantic fraud thrust upon our taxpayers."¹⁰¹ Kolb received many inquiries, however, from interested persons in the Northwest concerning Alabama. His two trips served to advertise and promote the state, and the resultant criticism was in large part politically inspired.

Another effort to secure immigration in which the agriculture department played a significant role was the Southern Interstate Convention which met at Montgomery in December, 1888. The chief promoter of the Montgomery meeting was F. B. Chilton, Secretary of the Texas State Immigration Society.¹⁰² Chilton, Kolb, Mayor Warren S. Reese of Montgomery and Governor Seay made the arrangements, issued the call and the convention assembled on the appointed

day.¹⁰³ Representatives were present from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and New Mexico. A permanent Inter-state Immigration Bureau and an executive committee were formed.¹⁰⁴ Little practical work was accomplished, but the convention undoubtedly served to dramatize the issue of immigration. Some papers opposed the convention, however, or any convention that advocated an influx of foreigners, "many of them holding the anti-republican and dangerous heresies of the Old World. . . ."¹⁰⁵

Kolb's successors continued to promote immigration though with nothing approaching his zeal. Kolb tried in vain to get an economy minded legislature to appropriate money for advertising the state and attracting settlers.¹⁰⁶ Even if the money had been provided, Alabama's poor roads, inadequate school system and depressed economy to say nothing of a large Negro population would have discouraged any appreciable number of immigrants from entering the state.

The department did signal work in enforcing fertilizer laws which required an analysis of all commercial fertilizers sold in the state to be filed with the commissioner. Tags certifying compliance were attached to every fertilizer bag, and the bags themselves were required to have printed on them an analysis and the commercial

⁹⁶ *Montgomery Advertiser*, June 2, 1888; *Commissioner's Report*, 1888, 11.

⁹⁷ For a list of the exhibits see *Anniston Weekly Watchman*, August 9, 1888.

⁹⁸ Cammack, "Reuben Francis Kolb," 64-71.

⁹⁹ *Commissioner's Report*, 1888, 11.

¹⁰⁰ *Montgomery Advertiser*, October 7, 1888. Kolb's claims were pressed by the same papers that had supported him for commissioner of agriculture.

¹⁰¹ *The Newton Messenger*, April 20, 1889.

¹⁰² *Montgomery Advertiser*, December 13, 1888.

¹⁰³ Reuben F. Kolb to Thomas Seay, September 13, 1888; Reuben F. Kolb to F. B. Chilton, September 14, 1888; Reuben F. Kolb to F. B. Chilton, October 10, 1888, *Agriculture Department Letter Book* 198.

¹⁰⁴ *Montgomery Advertiser*, December 12, 13, 1888.

¹⁰⁵ *Clarke County Democrat*, December 13, 1888.

¹⁰⁶ *Commissioner's Report*, 1888, p. 12.

value of their contents. Farmers could send samples of suspect fertilizer to the state chemist for free analysis.¹⁰⁷ The sale of these tags provided the department with its chief means of revenue, and from the funds of the office, money was appropriated to the State Agricultural Society, the experiment stations and agricultural schools, and to the Agricultural and Mechanical College. Printing costs and salaries also came from the department's treasury. Under the ubiquitous Kolb, the department influenced in some way every farmer's home in Alabama, and there was some truth in his boast that the department was "the practical agricultural college for the masses, the old and the young, the learned and the unlearned."¹⁰⁸

There was little doubt that Kolb would be a strong candidate for governor in 1890. He was reappointed commissioner in 1889 despite protests that he was using the farmers' institutes for his own political aggrandizement. He had some newspaper support,¹⁰⁹ however, and the backing of organizations like the Bullock County Alliance, which unanimously passed resolutions endorsing his management of the department.¹¹⁰ Kolb wrote a letter to the *Decatur News* stating that his candidacy for governor had nothing to do with his being reappointed commissioner, a position which he claimed on the basis of his record rather than on Democratic usage.¹¹¹

There had long been opposition to the office of commissioner being an appointive position. In due course, a bill passed the Senate in 1890 making the office elective. When the bill came before the House, the Alliance leaders, who were strong backers of Kolb, attached an amendment which extended Kolb's term from its expiration date of August 31, 1891, until his successor was elected and qualified by the 1892 elections. The Senate refused to concur and after considerable debate, the bill passed as originally drafted. The bill was approved February 18, 1891, which meant that Governor Jones had the task of naming a successor to Kolb for the interim period between August 1891 and December 1892.¹¹²

The man appointed by Jones was Hector

D. Lane of Huntsville, formerly a staunch advocate of Kolb and the Alliance. Kolb refused to yield the office, claiming that under the law making the commissionership elective he retained his position until the election decided his successor.¹¹³ Thus, the state had two agriculture commissioners. The contending parties brought the case before the Montgomery County Probate Court and Judge F. C. Randolph ruled that the law making the office elective passed February 18, 1891, became effective on the day of its approval and the office was elective from that time forward. The former law empowering the governor to make an original appointment or appoint a successor was plainly in conflict with the new law because an office could not be both appointive and elective, and so the older act was repealed.¹¹⁴

The ruling was a victory for Kolb but a short-lived one. On appeal to the State Supreme Court, the justices ruled three to two. The majority decision was that the new law did not become operative until the general election in August 1892, and that the governor had the right to make the appointment. The minority held that a special election should have been held on February 18 when the act passed.¹¹⁵ Kolb then yielded to the decision and moved out of the commissioner's office. A jubilant paper

¹⁰⁷ *Commissioner's Report*, 1883-1886, 8-10; 1888, 13. *Sixth Annual Session* (July, 1889), 38.

¹⁰⁸ *Commissioner's Report*, 1888, 9.

¹⁰⁹ *The Opelika Semi-Weekly Democrat*, August 6, 1889, strongly urged Kolb's reappointment.

¹¹⁰ *Union Springs Herald*, January 16, 1889.

¹¹¹ Quoted in *Montgomery Advertiser*, August 25, 1889.

¹¹² *House Journal*, 1890-1891, 476-477; *Senate Journal*, 165, 748; *Acts*, 1890-1891, 1213; *Montgomery Advertiser*, December 4-5, 7 and 10, 1890; *Union Springs Herald*, February 25, 1891.

¹¹³ *Eufaula Weekly Times and News*, August 13, 1891.

¹¹⁴ *Montgomery Advertiser*, September 10, 1891.

¹¹⁵ *Reports of Cases Argued And Determined In The Supreme Court of Alabama During The November Term, 1890*, 92: 636-638 (Montgomery, 1892); *The Southern Reporter*, 9: 873-180 (St. Paul, Minnesota, 1891); *Montgomery Advertiser*, October 4, 1891.

said, "Every grain of corn has been shelled off of the Kolb. No more seed left."¹¹⁶ Although the office became elective, there is considerable doubt that it was a step toward better and more efficient government.

After Kolb left the agriculture department, he entered a turbulent political career that saw him defeated twice, in 1892

and 1894, for governor. From 1911 to 1915 he again served as commissioner of agriculture, and in 1914 made a final unsuccessful bid to win the governorship. But his work as a pioneer in scientific agriculture and as an aggressive commissioner of agriculture were his major accomplishments.

¹¹⁶ *Russell Register*, October 10, 1891.

THE VIRTUES OF OXEN

Oxen as draft animals are becoming scarce. Two generations ago ox teams were common everywhere; now a yoke of oxen in the streets of cities or populous towns will attract almost as much attention as a pair of elephants or camels. The patient ox is too slow for this hurrying age and is being supplanted by the horse. But on many of our rocky New England farms the slow but sure ox is not to be despised. He has been an important factor in the past in reclaiming these farms from the wilderness and bringing them into their present state of cultivation, and he is still very useful in operations where speed is not a consideration. For clearing fields of rocks or breaking up and plowing rocky land, he cannot be equaled. (1907)

—*The Old Farmer's Almanac Sampler*

All the tackle required for a pair of cattle is a yoke and chain. Compare this with the expensive harness needed for a pair of horses. Put two bowpins in place, slip the ring on the cart tongue or hook on the chain, and your team is ready for business before one of your horses is half-harnessed. The slowness of motion lessens the chances of accident to team or plow. When the latter strikes a fast rock, the oxen do not become nervous and jump forward, breaking some of the tackle, but wait with unbounded patience until the plowman has cleared the obstacle. [1907]

—*The Old Farmer's Almanac Sampler*

John W. Walker and the Land Laws of the 1820's

HUGH C. BAILEY

In 1819, the Sixteenth Congress was forced to turn its attention to federal land policy. Outside of the "Missouri Question," no issue of greater significance for western development could have been considered. Under the prevailing system based on the Land Laws of 1800 and 1803, federal lands were sold on a credit basis, the purchasers being allowed to spread three-fourths of their payments over a four-year period. From the very inception of this policy, many purchasers had found its provisions too stringent to meet. Their appeals had led Congress to pass 11 separate relief acts between 1806 and 1820 extending the credit period for various groups of purchasers. These were merely stop-gap measures, however, and with the advent of the depression of 1819, pressure for a complete change of the basis system became very great.

More than any other state, Alabama's future depended on a favorable congressional revision of this policy, and John W. Walker, its first Senator, devoted himself to obtaining it. A report from the Public Land Office in the summer of 1820 revealed that of the entire balance of \$21,173,489.87 which would remain due from purchasers of public lands on December 31, 1820, \$11,220,685.55 would be owed by purchasers of Alabama lands. Under the terms of the credit system, Alabama owners owed half the entire federal land debt.¹

After the decline of commodity prices following the panic of 1819, the solvency of the state's inhabitants depended upon the receiving of relief. Due to the "flush times" and the spirit of the Alabama boom, many of her settlers had paid fabulous prices for public lands and had already, in one or two payments, given the Treasury "more than the same number of purchasers any where else." In 1817, the Government Land Office had been moved from Nashville, Tennessee to Huntsville, Alabama and on February 2, 1818, for the first time, Tennessee Valley lands outside the bounds of

"Old Madison County" were offered for sale. Before this, "the most wonderful accounts of their fertility" had been circulated in the "older states." Congress, in settling the "Yazoo Frauds" disputes, did its share in contributions to the inflation by the creation of the "Mississippi Stock," "receivable in the payment of lands in this region of Country alone." Four million dollars of this paper was thrown into the market at once and was bought at 40 to 60 per cent of its face value. Its effect was immediately seen in the increased price of Alabama lands. Despite the prices, the rapid settlement of the Tennessee Valley began with the 1818 sales and within a year seven well-populated counties had come into being. But a crisis arose when the depression came.²

A similar situation existed in other parts of the state. "I believe that it is generally understood that we here cannot pay for our lands if the present laws are enforced," former Senator Charles Tait wrote from the Alabama River Basin. He advocated that the federal government adopt no new principles, but merely grant an extension of time for payment and the remission of back interest. He believed that if the payments were divided into eight installments, with no interest charged until the day the installment became due, the mass of purchasers would be able to meet their payments, and that they would do this rather than forfeit their lands. He urged Walker to lead the Congress in such a course.³

For over a year, Walker had realized the

¹ Payton J. Treat, *The National Land System, 1785-1820* (New York, 1910), 101-143; *American State Papers, Public Lands* (8 vols., Washington, 1832-1861), 3: 645.

² Thomas Taylor, "Early History of Madison County, Alabama," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* (Montgomery, 1930-), 1: 489-495 (Winter, 1930) Charles Tait to John W. Walker, October 16, 1820, in Walker Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery.

³ *Ibid.*

critical nature of the land situation in Alabama, and on no other issue did he fight as vigorously for action. Early in 1820, a bill was reported from the Senate Committee on Public Lands which opened a general debate on land policy. On February 22, Walker moved the adoption of an amendment providing that purchasers of public lands should be privileged to relinquish their lands for resale before the law went into operation; the government would then sell the land in the same manner as all forfeited land, "but, if such lands shall sell for more than one dollar and... cents per acre," the amendment held, "the excess shall be paid over to the former certificate holder," provided that this excess did not exceed the amount the purchaser had already paid the United States.⁴

After presenting his amendment, Walker spoke at length in its defense. He held that the practical effect of the system then in use was to give purchasers, by indulgences, an almost indefinite period of time, as one could see by the fact that some payments on lands purchased in Ohio over 20 years before were still unmade. Moreover, he pointed out that at the present time the amount owed the federal government for lands amounted to over \$22,000,000, "a fearful sum."

The object of Walker's bill was to change the law which produced such results. If a change were suddenly and radically made, he felt, it would diminish the price of lands so much as to prejudice the interest of the current holders, and particularly, the recent purchasers. The latter, he said, had, in many cases, paid the actual value of the lands in the first installment. The new law should protect these people against the depreciation which would result from its passage; Walker's amendment would provide such protection.

Some would object, he knew, because the amendment would bring relief to speculators as well as legitimate buyers. Walker did not think that this would be generally true. Some speculators would, undoubtedly, profit, he confessed. But there were a great many who had purchased for prac-

tical agricultural purposes, who were now satisfied they had given four times the value for their lands that they were worth. He was himself satisfied that if the lands were now offered for sale, they would not bring as much as had been paid on their first installment. In Alabama, its Senator held, many purchases seemed to have been made "under the influence of a sort of delirium," induced by many things, among them being the release of the Mississippi Stock as a feature of the Yazoo Compromise, the activity of some seventy newly-established banks in Kentucky and Tennessee "whose paper was profusely scattered over the country," and the influence of 25-cent cotton.

"It was the most discreet men sometimes who gave the highest prices," Walker reported. "He had known, for example, as high as seventy-eight dollars per acre given for land by those who bought it with the full intention themselves to cultivate it." Should the system be changed to a strictly cash basis, as was proposed, Walker believed that great injury would be done to the many credit purchasers and those who planned to purchase land on credit. He felt it to be a moral obligation on the part of the government to "interpose for the relief of the late purchasers." The purchaser had a right to expect a certain credit would be given, "as heretofore, on all lands thrown into the market." Many said it was time to stop. Walker was willing to go along, but he "would not violate the rights of those who had purchased under existing laws."

Senator Rufus King (New York), while approving conversion to a cash basis, opposed Walker's amendment. King feared that every land purchaser would call on the government to review all his transactions and extend him relief. He also held that no one "would be found mad enough" to bid against a recent purchaser on the resale of surrendered land. Walker said that if this were true, it would be equally true of land

⁴ *Annals of Congress* (16 Cong., 1 Sess., 1819), 444-450; Treat, *The National Land System 1785-1820*, 139.

reverting under the current system. He argued that his amendment would be favorable to the government, putting into the Treasury at once what otherwise would accrue to it over a 10-year period.

On King's argument as to competition on reverted lands, Walker conceded that in the case of Alabama, "the former owners of land reverting or surrendered, would have a decided preference, and few would be found to bid against them." He agreed that to the degree that this was true, what King had said showed the expediency of the amendment.

The opinion of the Senate was such, however, that Walker felt his measure could not carry at once and temporarily withdrew it. On February 28, 1820, Senator Ninian Edwards of Illinois, with firm western backing, introduced an amendment providing that a squatter should obtain a right to purchase any quarter section "previously exposed to public sale . . . in the same manner & on such terms as were heretofore authorized by law." In other words, he proposed to continue the credit system on land previously offered for sale. (He believed that sale of public lands should be confined to actual settlers. The proposed modification of the system, he emphasized, would really be a boom to speculators). After debate, Edward's amendment was defeated 31 to 12, with Walker and King both supporting the Edwards amendment.⁵

Upon this defeat, Walker immediately moved that his amendment be considered; action was postponed, however, until March 8, 1820. On that day the Alabama Senator again took the floor and described the conditions in his state and elsewhere as an argument for his measure. Apparently sensing defeat, however, he moved the postponement of its consideration. This proposal was defeated; the Senate then voted on the Walker amendment defeating it by a vote of 29 to 8. Joining Walker and William Rufus King (Alabama) in supporting the measure were Edwards and Thomas (Illinois), Johnson and Logan (Kentucky), Noble of Indiana and Smith of South Carolina.⁶

Senator Edwards then moved the adoption of a preemption amendment. This measure provided that the squatter might purchase one-quarter section at private sale, "upon the same terms and conditions in every respect as have heretofore been provided by law." Significantly, Walker and King (Alabama) refused to support this bill which would have provided private sales for settlers before public auctions, and they joined with 26 colleagues to defeat the measure 28 to 9.⁷

The following day the land law as reported by the committee was given its second reading, and passed by a vote of 31 to 7. Walker and King joined in supporting this measure which became the famous Land Law of 1820. Among its most prominent features, of course, were the dis-establishment of the credit system and the reduction of the minimum price of lands from \$2.00 to \$1.25 an acre.⁸

With the passage of this measure the first session of the Sixteenth Congress closed its consideration of the land question without the provision of substantial relief to those purchasers who needed it most. Walker was greatly disappointed. He had been kept constantly informed by his friends of the situation in Alabama and of their opinions of the land question. In January 1820, Israel Pickens, a future governor of the state, wrote that a "debt of near 10 millions to be taken from our disposal [sic] means within 4 or 5 years will leave little behind." Land relief, he argued, would do more than anything else to bring vigor and new life to every branch of industry and enterprise in the state. He advocated the abandoning of part of the original purchases of lands

⁵ *Annals of Congress* (16 Cong., 1 Sess., 1819), 450-458; *Senate Journal* (16 Cong., 1 Sess., 1819), 190.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 217; *Annals of Congress* (16 Cong., 1 Sess., 1819), 458, 481, 486, 489.

⁷ *Senate Journal* (16 Cong., 1 Sess., 1819), 216-217.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 222-223. The seven votes cast against the measure would appear to have been cast mainly by men who felt the measure did not go far enough. They were Brown and Johnson of Louisiana, Johnson and Logan of Kentucky, Noble of Indiana, Edwards of Illinois, and Smith of South Carolina.

and the application of the initial payments to a smaller purchase as the most feasible solution.⁹

In February, Walker's brother, James Sanders, wrote from Coosawda, where he was visiting the dying Alabama Governor W. W. Bibb. He reported that it was almost impossible to make land sales to good men, even on credit. This was especially true of those lands bought at the first sales in 1818 and on which the second payments were due in August of 1819 and the last would be due in August, 1821.

James Sanders felt that this condition would continue until the would-be purchasers saw some certainty of an extension of time for government payments and a relinquishment of back interest. He said that if Congress intended to do anything in the matter, the sooner the better, "that we may know our fate." "In the uncertainty," he wrote, "the lands belonging to the Government will not sell for more than one fourth of what they did two years ago—indeed there is not funds enough in the country to buy all that is offered even at two dollars an acre," and he feared that the State would not come out much better.¹⁰

Later in the year, the *Alabama Republican* reviewed the entire situation with some alarm. It noted that the lands in the big bend of the Tennessee River had sold for approximately \$8,000,000. After the first payments were met successfully, the price of cotton had dropped from 25 to 10 cents per pound, and "the common currency of the country" had become "so depreciated that \$100 would only pay \$85 debt at the land office." Unless Congress took some action, the journal reported, "we hazard nothing in venturing the assertion that of the debt of 7 or 8 millions, which will be due at the expiration of five years from the purchase, not \$100,000 will ever be paid."

Recently it had witnessed the public sale of some of the best lands in the state at from \$2-\$6 an acre, lands which adjoined others that had sold from \$20-\$40 an acre two years ago. The paper predicted that if Congress passed a measure authorizing the "transfer of payments from one tract of land

to another, approximately one-fourth to one-third of the lands sold in the Madison County area "would be paid for at the enormous high prices at which they were bought," while the residue would revert to the United States. It prayed for such a measure, however, believing that it would enable the area to "become one of the most populous and productive in the U. States."¹¹

At the advent of the new year, Alabama's Attorney General Henry Hitchcock reported that U. S. Secretary of the Treasury William Crawford's favorable views toward revision of the land laws would increase his strength in Alabama and the western country.¹² In Alabama the land question was becoming one of paramount political importance.

Receiving such intelligence as this, one of Walker's first actions early in the second session of the Sixteenth Congress was to introduce a new relief bill. When he did this, the Alabama Senator believed that he was presenting a bill whose first section would meet "the wants of all who have bought at any fair price and only want time," and whose second section would be "particularly calculated for the relief of Alabama—of those to whom more time would be unavailing."¹³

Senator Johnson of Kentucky opened the issue in the new session by presenting the first resolution on the subject. This provided that a purchaser might retain as much land as his payments covered at the original purchase price, and the remainder should be forfeited. "But the great speculations had been those of 1818 and 1819, and on these lands only one-fourth of the price had generally been paid." Johnson's

⁹ Pickens to Walker, January 5, 1820, Walker Papers, Montgomery.

¹⁰ James S. to John W. Walker, February 22, 1820, *ibid.*

¹¹ *Alabama Republican* (Huntsville), December 1, 1820.

¹² Hitchcock to Walker, January 2, 1821, Walker Papers, Montgomery.

¹³ Walker to Charles Tait, November 20, 1820, Charles Tait Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery.

resolutions would have resulted in these purchasers losing three-fourths of their lands.¹⁴

Walker's measure, with an additional feature, was essentially the same as he had offered in the previous session, i.e., provision for relinquishment, resale by the government, and the return to the original holder of all received above \$1.25 an acre, but no more than the amount he had paid the government. The addition provided for an extension of credit to those who chose to retain all or a part of their lands. A discount of three-eighths of the purchase price and interest was to be made for prompt payments, and lesser amounts as the time was extended.

On December 28, the Committee on Public Lands reported a bill containing, in addition to Senator Johnson's relinquishment plan, many of Walker's recommendations. Among these were an extension of credit, remission, and a discount *on the balance due*. Walker successfully opposed an effort of Senator Eaton (Tennessee) to restrict relief, to actual settlers, and in turn was defeated in an effort to have the discount apply to the entire purchase price, instead of the amount due. His vote and that of King (Alabama) were the deciding ones which prevented a substitution of 25 for 37½ per cent as the discount rate given to those who made an immediate, complete payment.¹⁵

In the support of the bill as reported by the committee, Walker delivered the longest and most eloquent speech of his career. He opened by noting that those who wished to recommit the bill had several specific reasons. He then, in turn, considered each of these.

In the first instance, those who wished to recommit the measure held that the bill was unjust since it did not provide any aid to those who purchased land before December 30, 1816. Walker pointed out that these purchasers had repeatedly received relief and did not stand in need as did those who came after them. He concurred with the "gentleman from Tennessee" that the later purchasers, particularly in Alabama, "are

better entitled to relief than others, because they have purchased at enormous prices." He held that the situation in Alabama "is peculiar, is critical, is deplorable." Relief that would be effective in other states would not be sufficient here. Time would do nothing for Alabama.

But the question was larger than that of the speaker's native state; it was "a great national question" which concerned "the paramount interests of the entire Confederacy." A system must be framed, Walker held, which would remedy the whole national problem; particular hardships must be incident to this.¹⁶

The second objection to the bill was that it was not confined to actual settlers only. Purchasers who had not made settlements were denounced as "speculators," and some maintained they should be punished. Walker could see nothing in the situation to warrant the Congress making such a distinction as some members wished. He pointed out that to give actual settlers such a premium would be to provide "a bounty for removing from the old States to the new." It seemed to presuppose there was merit in such a removal.

In regard to the new states, the Congress had looked at the whole and not a part. They had regarded the public lands as the domain of the nation. "Your object had been to *sell* them for the highest price," Walker proclaimed. The Congress had invited all the world to the auction, the only condition being that the highest bidder should get the land. To further this policy, the Congress had declared "that the lands of nonresidents shall never be taxed higher than the lands of residents." On many occasions it had refused "any particular advantages to *squatters*." Walker wondered if the gentlemen would "make a difference after the sale" which they had not made before.

¹⁴ Treat, *The National Land System, 1785-1820*, 147.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 148-149; *Senate Journal* (16 Cong., 2 Sess., 1819), 163-164.

¹⁶ *Annals of Congress* (16 Cong., 2 Sess., 1819), 222-236.

The third objection to the bill was that it extended its benefits to town sites. Again, some held that these had been the subject of speculation and should be beyond the pale of relief. But Walker wondered who had been the main profiteer. His answer was, "Your Treasury, sir." "Yes, sir," he exclaimed, "the Government is, in reality, the great land speculator. Your system is built upon speculation." If speculation was a sin, then the government itself was the chief sinner. It should first do penance before it sought to punish others.

Walker pointed out that the credit system had developed until, by September, 1819, the land debt amounted to \$22,000,000, a debt which was concentrated in the new states. These babes in the family of the nation would naturally tend to be drawn together by common interests. Already they claimed one-third of the representation in the lower house. What might have been the result had the debt of their citizens been allowed to reach \$1,000,000,000? Fortunately the credit system had been abolished, but what of the debt that continued to exist?

The Alabama Senator thought that the privilege of transfer was of the first importance; it provided "an admirable expedient for lessening the debt, without sacrificing the interest of either party." It would mean more to Alabama than all the other provisions of the bill. It would enable her people to save some of their land and to get out of debt.

The allowance of a deduction of three-eighths for prompt payment would aid to a great extent, but, of course, the degree of aid would depend upon the time of payment. Walker was convinced of one thing, "that more money will be obtained by the bill than ever would be obtained without it." He was sure that, "Five-eighths of the purchase-money is much more than Alabama's lands could be sold for."

The Alabama Senator then cited concrete conditions which made relief imperative. Credit purchasers had calculated on the indefinite continuance of the system, he held. Now that Congress had abolished it,

"the price is reduced by your act; the value of the article sold is diminished in the hands of the purchaser," by act of Congress. Relief must be given.

Records would indicate that there was a great inequality in the price of lands sold. They would show that some 14,955,073 acres sold outside of Alabama were purchased for \$28,741,886, while the 3,646,857 acres sold in Alabama brought \$15,312,565. Under these conditions could the Senate refuse relief?

"Remember that you are told from high authority that the total currency of the Union has been suddenly reduced from one hundred and ten to forty-five millions of dollars, fifty-four per cent more than one-half," Walker told the Senate. The 70 banks which flooded Alabama had closed. What was left floating of Mississippi stock was nearly at par, while cotton had fallen from 25 to 10 cents a pound. "You have repudiated the seventy banks," Walker said, "and the planter who owes you must exchange one hundred dollars in these vile rags for eighty-five dollars of such as will pass at muster in the land office." He found it absurd to expect payment of \$10,000,000 from a people living under such conditions.

In conclusion, Walker reported:

The President recommends relief; your minister of Finance advises; your committee reports; the nation expects it. Individuals petition, nay whole States supplicate your clemency. Seven of these new States and two Territories await with solicitude the fate you are preparing for them. . . . It is for you now to determine whether they shall be stifled by the horrible incubus of this debt. . . .¹⁷

With this plea, Walker rested the case for the relief bill. Shortly thereafter it was enacted into law.

No one was more delighted with the new law than was James Sanders Walker, John William's planter-speculator brother. The relief law, he reported, enabled him to dispose profitably of his highest priced lands, including purchases in the "Big Bend" of the Alabama River. Three months before,

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

he had written from Montgomery that he had not been able to sell a single acre during his current expedition to the south.¹⁸

Former Georgia Senator Tait expressed the gratitude of a people for Walker's exertions to give them a law which contained "ample provisions" for "relief." In his opinion the law and, particularly, Walker's speech had "increased and fixed" the Senator's popularity permanently.¹⁹

Tait's opinion appears to have been almost a general one. Walker was a popular hero. Upon the Senator's return to Huntsville in April, 1821, a public dinner was staged at the Huntsville Inn in gratitude to him. The *Alabama Republican* reported that it had seldom witnessed "a more numerous and respectable assemblage of persons" gathered to "testify their approbation of the conduct of a public servant."²⁰

The Land Law of 1821 which Walker fathered not only brought substantial relief to the debtor-farmer but provided a pattern which for the following decade channeled the course of national land legislation. Between 1821 and 1832, a total of 11 relief measures were enacted extending the

time and applicability of the parent measure.²¹ These, as Professor Roy M. Robbins observed, enabled "the indebtedness incurred under the Act of 1800" to be "reduced without injury to the citizenry of the West and with but little loss to the government."²²

For his role in initiating this important national policy, many blessed John Williams Walker even after poor health forced his retirement from the Senate in 1823. His work, in many instances, had been instrumental in saving their very homes and farms and had brought hope again to a large segment of the rising "New West."

¹⁸ James S. to John W. Walker, January 28, April 21, 1821, Walker Papers, Montgomery.

¹⁹ Tait to Walker, April 11, 1821, *ibid.*

²⁰ *Alabama Republican*, April 20, 1821.

²¹ Treat, *The National Land System, 1785-1820*, 152-160, 188. Of all the states, Alabama derived the most benefit from the relief measures. "Of the four and a half million acres relinquished under these acts, three-fourths were given up" within her boundaries. Similarly more Alabama citizens pre-empted relinquished lands under the terms of the Acts of 1830 and 1831 than in any other state.

²² Roy M. Robbins, *Our Landed Heritage, The Public Domain, 1776-1936* (Princeton, 1942), 38-39.

SWINE IN EARLY VIRGINIA

Hogs swarm like Vermine upon the Earth, and are often accounted such, insomuch that when an Inventory of any considerable Man's Estate is taken by the Executors, the Hogs are left out, and not listed in the Appraisement. The Hogs run where they list, and find their own Support in the Woods, without any Care of the Owner; and in many Plantations it is well, if the Proprietor can find and catch the Pigs, or any part of a Farrow, when they are young, to mark them; for if there be any market in a Gang of Hogs, they determine the Property of the rest, because they seldom miss their Gangs; but as they are bred in Company, so they continue to the End. (1705)

Robert Beverley, *The History and Present State of Virginia*

THE "OLD FARMER" PREFERRED GOOD CIDER TO DEMON RUM

See that your cellars are well stored with good cider, that wholesome and cheering liquor which is the product of your own farms; a man is to be pitied that cannot enjoy himself or his friend over a pot of good cider, the product of his own country, and perhaps of his own farm, which suits best his constitution and his pocket, much better than West Indian spirit. (1793)

--*The Old Farmer's Almanac Sampler*

The Attitude of the Business Community Toward Agriculture During the McNary-Haugen Period

JOHN PHILIP GLEASON

During the booming years of the 1920's, the business community enjoyed unbounded prestige and prosperity. To businessmen everything seemed rosy and they understandably had scant sympathy for critics and whiners. But one group set up a cacophony of complaint which would not blend into the crescendo of Coolidge prosperity, and which could not be ignored. This group was the farmers. Since their own bubble had burst in 1920, farmers had endured a depression of fluctuating severity, and it was especially galling to them in their period of distress that the rest of the economy was booming as it never had before. They wanted a share of prosperity and agitated noisily to get it. Early in the decade their demands for relief, while clamorous, were unorganized, but by 1924 their energies were being channeled into the McNary-Haugen campaign, with its demand for "Equality for Agriculture."

It was noteworthy that some of the McNary-Haugenites meant more by equality than mere economic improvement. They were disturbed by the growing preponderance of business influence and prestige and wanted to restore a more equitable partnership between agriculture and industry. They believed that there was a movement afoot to industrialize America at the expense of agriculture and that it endangered the nation. America could not survive the loss of a healthy and independent agricultural class which had been considered the foundation of national strength since the time of Jefferson.¹

Although many McNary-Haugenites were vocally Jeffersonian, the contest was not a clear-cut one between agrarians and industrialists. So great was the business community's prestige that many farmers

had what might be called a Henry Ford complex. They admired the businessmen's efficiency and success and saw in Ford the ideal of American citizenship.² The farmer's ideology was, therefore, somewhat fuzzy; and this ambiguity was present in the McNary-Haugen drive itself. For, in spite of the Jeffersonian clamor accompanying it, the program was distinctly business-oriented. The man who originated the scheme and who was the driving force through the entire McNary-Haugen campaign was himself a businessman. George N. Peek was president of the Moline Plow Company when he conceived the plan, which was first embodied in a pamphlet called *Equality for Agriculture*. All of his experience—except during World War I—had been in the manufacture and sale of farm implements, and he approached the farm problem as a businessman from the moment he realized that "You can't sell a plow to a busted customer."³ The plan itself was a frank attempt to cut agriculture in on the benefits of tariff-protected capitalism. The mother of trusts was to be

¹ Gilbert C. Fite, *George N. Peek and the Fight for Farm Parity* (Norman, 1954), chapter 8, *passim*. Henry N. Smith, *Virgin Land; the American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, 1950), *passim*, discusses the agrarian mystique in the 19th century.

² Reynold M. Wik, "Henry Ford and the Agricultural Depression of 1920-23," *Agricultural History*, 29: 15-22 (January, 1955). Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York, 1955), chapter 3, discusses the contrast between the "hard" and "soft" aspects of farm agitation. See 124 ff. for reference to an early 20th century movement to bring farmers and businessmen closer together and make farmers more business-like.

³ Fite, *George N. Peek and the Fight for Farm Parity*, 38.

made effective for agriculture as well as for industry.⁴

Probably the most significant effect of the McNary-Haugen campaign upon the business community was the stimulus it provided the businessman's agricultural education. Although there were geographic variations, most businessmen heartily disapproved of the McNary-Haugen plan. But, in spite of their vigorous attacks upon it, the plan failed to succumb. Businessmen were therefore forced to take the agricultural problem seriously, to study it, and to search for solutions they could support.

Characteristically perhaps, businessmen were better on the practical than on the theoretical level. Some of their arguments against the McNary-Haugen bill were very cogent, and their programs of assistance and general studies were commendable. Confusion abounded, however, when businessmen tried to define the theoretical position from which they were approaching the agricultural problem. Some adopted a narrowly "business" point of view, and seemed to care for little except how farm distress and attempts to alleviate it might affect their own economic interests. More interesting were the businessmen who were tinged with a Jeffersonian sympathy for the farmer. Some of the surprising agricultural fundamentalism one encounters in the business press at this time stemmed no doubt from the nineteenth-century "agrarian myth," but the myth was reinforced by its harmony with the businessman's code of rugged individualism. This confusion of ideas helps to explain how businessmen could profess great reverence for the farmer as the keystone of national character, while they virtuously rejected his desperate appeals for help.

Although such inconsistencies in business thinking remained even at the end of the McNary-Haugen period, the experience of these four years was decidedly beneficial. Businessmen were beginning to realize that something would have to be done about the farm problem and an examination of their pronouncements on agriculture suggests that the McNary-Haugen campaign helped

to prepare the business community for the more far-reaching legislation of the 1930's.

The McNary-Haugen bill itself was disliked by businessmen.⁵ Most of them were unconvinced when the bill was introduced that farmers needed such radical relief measures. They would concede no more than that the farmer's situation might be "unpleasant"; it certainly was not desperate.⁶ Furthermore, businessmen believed that the working out of economic law and not "petty political panaceas" would most effectively end the unpleasantness. As *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle* put it, the farmer had been "... wandering mentally in a morass of political speculation, but he lives in a fertile valley of

⁴ Peek believed that the farmer's difficulty stemmed from the fact that he bought in a protected market but sold in an unprotected one. Existing tariff duties were ineffective for any commodity of which there was an exportable surplus since the world market set the domestic price in such cases. Peek proposed, therefore, that the exportable surplus of any commodity be segregated and sold abroad by a government corporation at the world market price. Thus the supplies needed for the domestic market would be freed of the incubus of the exportable surplus, and the domestic price could be set by parity, or by adding the amount of the tariff to the world market price. The losses suffered by the government corporation in its dumping would be prorated back to the producers of the commodity by means of an "equalization fee," to be collected through a scrip device, according to the first version of the plan. This scheme was embodied in the McNary-Haugen bill which was first introduced in 1924, and continued to be an issue until the election of Hoover in 1928. George N. Peek and Hugh S. Johnson, *Equality for Agriculture* (Moline, Ill., 1922), outlines the basic ideas of the plan. Murray R. Benedict, *Farm Policies of the United States, 1790-1950* (New York, 1953), 207-214, is an excellent explanation of the plan. Fite, *George N. Peek and the Fight for Farm Parity*, *passim*, covers the history of the McNary-Haugen campaign.

⁵ The following publications were examined in detail for the business community's attitude toward agriculture: *The Nation's Business*, organ of the United States Chamber of Commerce; *American Industries*, organ of the National Association of Manufacturers; the Monthly Letter of the National City Bank of New York; and *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, which reprinted the opinions of many other publications, as well as private businessmen's, in its news sections.

⁶ "Nation's Business Observatory," *The Nation's Business*, 11:81 (October, 1923).

economic law." The "farmer's excitement" would, therefore, soon evaporate.⁷

The bill's basic assumptions about the tariff were attacked from two rather contradictory positions. Julius H. Barnes, at that time president of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, simply maintained that the tariff was already effective for agriculture; while the *Wall Street Journal* argued that agriculture was no infant industry, and that the mere fact that it could not compete with foreign producers did not justify tariff duties which would raise consumer prices. A Chicago banker struck directly at a related assumption of the bill by declaring that "... so-called surplus production is largely a myth."⁸

Businessmen subjected the relief mechanism provided by the McNary-Haugen bill to careful analysis and found it most unsatisfactory. They almost universally criticized the bill for being too complicated. This objection usually centered on the equalization fee, particularly in the earliest versions of the plan which provided that the fee be collected in scrip. The criticisms of this feature of the bill were well summed up by the National City Bank of New York, which called the plan "... cumbersome, indefinite, ineffective, and excessively costly."⁹ In later versions, after scrip was dropped and other collection devices substituted, the equalization fee was still repugnant to businessmen. They thought it would be almost impossible to collect, and doubted its constitutionality.¹⁰

Another feature of the bill which aroused the businessmen's constitutional scruples was its intention to relate the price of agricultural goods to the general level of prices by a parity formula. This tampering with price relationships was denounced as "vicious class legislation" which would result in "confusion, disorder, misery, and complete failure."¹¹ But the most fundamental objection to the McNary-Haugen bill was that it ignored the laws of economics. Businessmen argued that wartime inflation and overproduction had deranged the farm economy. Supply and demand were out of balance and only the price mechanism could restore them to equilib-

rium. Since the bill's purpose was to raise prices artificially it was worse than misguided; it was a heinous offense against economic law. "Price fixing is its [the bill's] goal," said one editorial, "looting of the United States Treasury the ultimate end."¹²

As the second half of this indictment noted, the McNary-Haugen plan would cost money. It would require a horde of spendthrift bureaucrats for its enforcement and, secondly, it would boost the cost of living.¹³ While the first of these effects was disagreeable enough, some businessmen seemed even more disturbed by the possibility that the plan might work. If farm prices were raised, the accompanying increase in the cost of living would beget demands for higher wages. Since the plan called for selling agricultural exports at world market prices, while a parity price prevailed at home, it would mean that foreign countries would have cheaper bread than America. Living expenses would drop in those countries, the cost of industrial production would be cut, and American manufacturers would thus be placed in an unfavorable position in respect to their foreign competi-

⁷ Editorials, *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 117: 1388 (September, 1923); 118: 2112 (May, 1924).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 118: 2128 (May, 1924); *Wall Street Journal* quoted, 118: 505 (February, 1924); 122: 2739-2740 (May, 1926).

⁹ National City Bank of New York, Monthly Letter—*Economic Conditions, Governmental Finance, United States Securities*, May, 1924, 72. Hereafter cited as *Bank Letter*. See also, February, 1924, 23-24; J. H. Barnes, "History Laughs at Price-Fixing," *Nation's Business*, 12: 17 (April, 1924).

¹⁰ *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 122: 1241-1242 (March, 1926).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 118: 1088 (March, 1924); *Bank Letter*, May, 1924, 76.

¹² *Ibid.*, February, 1924, 25; May, 1924, 71, 73; *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 122: 3410 (June, 1926); quotation from "Trade Paper Digest," *Nation's Business*, 12: 82-84 (February, 1924).

¹³ Point 8 of "objections to the McNary-Haugen bill" notes the extensive policing it would require, *Nation's Business*, 12: 52 (May, 1924); *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 118: 505 (February, 1924), quotes *Wall Street Journal* on effect bill would have on cost of living.

tors. Those fearful possibilities were most clearly outlined by Secretary Mellon in 1926, and his thesis was hotly resented by agricultural leaders. It confirmed their worst suspicions: businessmen were willing to sacrifice the interests of agriculture to those of industry.¹⁴

Businessmen usually cited less openly self-interested reasons for their opposition to the McNary-Haugen plan. They observed that it would aggravate the surplus problem because, if it raised prices, greater production was sure to result. They pointed out that it would not be as easy to dump the American surplus in the European market as the bill visualized; recipient nations would promptly raise their own tariff barriers. Furthermore, it would be a particularly offensive type of dumping since the government would be the export agent. And to those who argued that industry practiced dumping, the National City Bank responded that dumping could not be justified as a national policy, "... even though it may be practiced profitably to some extent in private business."¹⁵

The fact that the bill would put the government into business at all was dangerous. Such governmental operations would not remedy the situation, and they would be an invitation to further bureaucratic aggrandizement, which could lead to complete socialization. For this reason, the president of the Chicago Board of Trade called the McNary-Haugen bill a piece of "grotesque legislation" which was a threat to the entire nation.¹⁶ Nor would the bill be an un-mixed blessing even for farmers. Business spokesmen noted that raising the prices of grain staples would increase the expenses of dairymen and other farmers who purchased these staples. Likewise, the McNary-Haugen bill would endanger the "hopeful" cooperative movement and would discourage efforts at crop diversification.¹⁷ Since businessmen thought highly of these two developments as possible solutions to the farm problem, they were strengthened in their opposition.

While the majority of businessmen probably agreed with these strictures against the McNary-Haugen bill, there were geo-

graphic variations of attitude and some changes of opinion with the passage of time. Many businessmen in the distressed agricultural regions, whose economic interests were involved, supported the plan.¹⁸ As early as 1923, a conference of bankers and farmers in North Dakota urged the establishment of a government export corporation for wheat. Later the business interests of St. Paul were reported to be overwhelmingly in favor of the bill. *The Northwest Banker* and the Port of Portland Commission supported it and, even after Coolidge's first veto, the Illinois Bankers Association Executive Council resolved in favor of the bill. The vice-president of the Illinois bankers was "almost aghast" at the failure of businessmen to appreciate the seriousness of the agricultural situation.¹⁹ The example of the United States Chamber of Commerce suggests that the observer's distance from the reality of agricultural distress and its consequences was a decisive influence on

¹⁴ *Bank Letter*, May, 1924, 72; *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 118: 1088 (March, 1924), hint at this line of reasoning. Mellon's explicit statement quoted in *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 122: 3407-3408 (June, 1926). Fite, *George N. Peck and the Fight for Farm Parity* 164-165, gives reaction.

¹⁵ W. M. Jardine, "We Must Stop Exporting Wheat," *Nation's Business*, 12:21 (June 5, 1924); *Bank Letter*, March, 1924, 40-41, for tariff analysis; April, 1925, 56, for quotation.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, May, 1924, 75, 77-78; *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 121: 1866-1867 (October, 1925), quotes the president of the Chicago Board of Trade, who feared that the McNary-Haugen bill jeopardized the existence of grain exchanges.

¹⁷ *Bank Letter*, May, 1924, 74; *Nation's Business*, 12: 52 (May, 1924), points 9 and 10 of list of objections to McNary-Haugen bill.

¹⁸ Of the 300 or so organizations endorsing the first McNary-Haugen bill, roughly 70 were business, or "service," organizations. Almost all of these business groups were from the northwest or upper midwest; no business group east of Illinois was listed as endorsing the bill. "McNary-Haugen Bill," Hearing, H. R. Agriculture Committee (68 Cong., 1 sess., Washington, 1924), 741-746.

¹⁹ *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 117: 1075 (September, 1923); 118: 1338 (March, 1924); 126: 526 (January, 1928), reports all instances except *The Northwest Banker*, for which see, E. Englund, "The Bank's Part of the Farmer's Troubles," *Nation's Business*, 14: 54 (October, 1926).

the attitude which businessmen adopted. Several local chambers of commerce in depressed areas endorsed the bill, but the National Chamber, safely removed from the farmer's hardship, cherished the principles of individualism and remained a steadfast opponent of the plan.²⁰

The record of the National Chamber illustrates, however, the educational influence of the McNary-Haugenites' persistence. The continued agricultural unrest eventually led the Chamber into a thorough study of the farm problem which resulted in some surprising conclusions. Other business spokesmen changed their attitude, too. In 1927, *Commerce and Finance* decided to support the bill, declaring that subsidies were not new and, under the circumstances, a subsidy for agriculture was justifiable. *The Journal of Commerce*, while it did not support McNary-Haugen, spoke gravely of the need to find a solution for the farm problem.²¹

Indeed, businessmen realized all through the period that something was wrong with agriculture. Their uneasiness stimulated a series of articles reassuring businessmen that the trouble was not serious, including "The Profit Side of Farming," and "Farmers Don't Grumble to Me."²² But in 1926 the National Industrial Conference Board published a study, *The Agricultural Problem in the United States*, which contrasted sharply with such optimism. Its presentation more nearly resembled the "gloomy pictures" which businessmen accused farm leaders of "conjuring up." Two years later the Board failed to discern the trend toward farm prosperity which other spokesmen hailed. According to the Board, the agricultural situation had not improved, nor did it give any indication of doing so.²³

Businessmen were concerned about the agricultural situation because they appreciated the significance of farm purchasing power. A writer in the NAM magazine commented on this aspect of the economic importance of agriculture, and concluded that there could be no question of "the necessity of the businessman and the farmer continuing a campaign of close co-

operation." A Cleveland banker noted in 1927 that "Many a general manager of a corporation has waked up to the fact that the farmer is . . . a mighty important person, . . ." *The Nation's Business* was equally emphatic. In discussing accusations that big business was antagonistic to the farmer, it had the following to say: "When the next farm agitator ascribes sinister motives to a businessman who doesn't agree with his particular form of relief—oh, say to him, stuff and nonsense."²⁴

This advice helps explain why businessmen opposed most farm relief measures although they recognized the need for farm recovery. They had their own ideas about how farm relief should be handled. On one point, at least, businessmen refused to budge; no violation of the laws of economics could escape their censure. Much farm legislation offended here and businessmen were quick to point it out. "We conceive it to be a duty," *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle* declared solemnly, "to press home economic truth to the citizen— . . .

²⁰ For local chambers supporting the bill, see "McNary-Haugen Bill," Hearing, H. R. Agriculture Committee (68 Cong., 1 sess., Washington, 1924), 741-746; the resolution on agriculture of the 1924 national convention of the Chamber of Commerce is representative of the National Chamber's stand. *Nation's Business*, 12: 27 (June 5, 1924).

²¹ "Business Views in Review," *ibid.*, 15: 94 (April, 1927).

²² *Ibid.*, 14: 42-44 (April, 1926); 14: 38-40 (May, 1926); see also, J. W. Scott, "Farming Is Just a Business," 12: 13-15 (November, 1924); *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 121: 1620-1621 (October, 1925); 122: 1228-1229 (March, 1926); 125: 2324-2325 (October, 1927).

²³ National Industrial Conference Board, *The Agricultural Problem in the United States*, (New York, 1926). Chapter 5 for summary and conclusions. The Board's 1928 opinion of agriculture reported in *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 127: 2616-2617 (November, 1928); "gloomy pictures" quote, 124: 567 (January, 1927).

²⁴ C. J. Baer, "Making the Farmer a Business Man," *American Industries*, 26: 38 (October, 1925); *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 125: 2733 (November, 1927); editorial, *Nation's Business*, 15: 31 (February, 1927). See also, W. H. Dean, "The Great Northwestern Thaw," 12: 25 (October, 1924).

because there is not a proper response [to it]." But, although they believed that the natural working out of economic law was the true solution, some businessmen were prepared to admit that with care and the proper direction, man could hasten the operation of these natural laws.²⁵ Hence they were prepared to accept certain proposals for farm recovery.

Reducing agricultural production was a popular remedy, both with businessmen and the administration. Secretary Hoover suggested balancing production with domestic demand and President Coolidge agreed, adding that such a remedy would apply itself automatically if supply and demand were let alone.²⁶ Crop diversification was often added to proposals for reduced production. Both *The Nation's Business* and the National City Bank favored this idea,²⁷ but it was not universally accepted, nor was crop reduction. Some observers pointed out that industry worked the other way: by increasing production it offered goods to a larger market at lower prices. This method was largely inapplicable to agriculture because of the inelastic demand, but some of its benefits could be won by producing for the "quality table." Farmers could regain prosperity by raising more fruit and other specialty crops for which there was an increasing demand.²⁸

Objections to the idea of restricted production usually centered on the practical difficulties such a program would entail; or they rested upon the conviction that it was the "manifest destiny" of American agriculture to produce at full capacity all the time. *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle* expressed the latter position admirably when it wrote: "Two bales [of cotton] instead of one will harm nobody, but to create scarcity in the interest of price is not an unmixed benefaction for all men."²⁹

Crop diversification was probably the businessman's favorite suggestion for improving the agricultural situation. The President of the American Bankers Association believed that the tendency toward diversified farming was "... dictated by sound judgment and the necessities of the situation."³⁰ *The Nation's Business* also

strongly recommended diversification and ran many articles on the subject. The most eloquent description of its benefits, advising farmers to diversify by going into dairying, concluded with these words: "... soaring out over the heads of the spellbinders and hellraisers, surging mellifluously into the farthest reaches of the Mississippi Basin, is the more powerful argument: 'Moo-oo-oo'."³¹ This "powerful argument" failed to move the *Chronicle*, which insisted that the wheat areas should continue to produce "all they can," since, "It would be folly to waste the natural advantages of a region ... by trying to turn its agriculture into unnatural channels." In short, crop diversification was "heresy."³²

But neither the *Chronicle* nor the Association of Land Grant Colleges, which agreed that diversification was not a full solution,³³ could shake most businessmen's faith in this simple and painless way of

²⁵ Editorials, *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 118: 2494 (May, 1924); 118: 595 (February, 1924). On the efficacy of economic law, editorial, 123: 128 (July, 1926); J. E. Edgerton speech, *American Industries*, 26: 11 (November, 1925).

²⁶ *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 120: 411-412 (January, 1925); 119: 2606-2608 (December, 1924).

²⁷ *Bank Letter*, February, 1924, 23, 27-28; October, 1925, 172-174; editorial, *Nation's Business*, 14: 28-29 (November, 1926), emphasizes the need for reduced production of cotton; see footnote 31, for references to *Nation's Business* attitude toward diversification.

²⁸ S. R. McKelvie, "One Thing Law Making Can Do for the Farmer," *ibid.*, 14: 21-22 (September, 1926); J. H. Barnes, "The Market of Discontent," 16: 15-16 (May, 1928).

²⁹ "Nation's Business Observatory," *ibid.*, 11: 67 (July, 1923); editorials, *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 118: 2112 (May, 1924); 120: 1942 (April, 1925).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 118: 610 (February, 1924); *Bank Letter*, August, 1924, 120.

³¹ E. T. Peterson, "Wisconsin Speaks to Kansas," *Nation's Business*, 12: 66 (October, 1924). See also articles by the same author, 11: 37-38 (March, 1923); 11: 42-44 (November, 1923).

³² Editorials, *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 117: 2151 (November, 1923); 119: 626-627 (August, 1924).

³³ Association of Land Grant Colleges and Universities, *Report on the Agricultural Situation*, November, 1927, 31.

ending the agricultural crisis. Businessmen preached diversification and lent money to assist farmers in carrying it out.³⁴ They also extended credit to agricultural cooperatives, for many businessmen felt that the cooperative movement was an equally promising method of reconstructing agriculture on a sounder basis. The Sears Roebuck Agricultural Foundation said, for example, "Cooperative marketing offers the only sound and permanent solution to the farmer's selling."³⁵ The Agricultural Commission of the American Bankers Association supported cooperatives and the NAM ran a favorable article in its magazine. Cooperatives were also endorsed by the Secretary of Agriculture and President Coolidge.³⁶ Indeed there was so much enthusiasm for cooperatives that it was necessary to point out that they alone could not solve the farm problem, and the recalcitrant *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* opposed them on less reasonable grounds.³⁷

Businessmen suggested two other remedies for the farm problem. One was the notion that prosperity could be restored by finding industrial uses for farm products. This idea was advanced several times but failed to gain much stature as a remedy for the situation. Finally, the Investment Bankers Association helpfully proposed that farmers explore the possibilities of parcel post, which might allow them to reach the consumer "direct" and eliminate "several middlemen."³⁸

When they turned from analysis to action, businessmen attempted to assist agriculture in two general ways: by programs of direct aid, undertaken locally; and by comprehensive studies of the agricultural situation which they hoped would result in constructive programs. The former type of direct local action is best exemplified in the projects sponsored by Chambers of Commerce. In Kansas City, the local Chamber encouraged improved cattle-raising by offering prizes for pure-bred stock. In Boston a local milk-distributing system was designed to assist small producers; while the Spokane Chamber encouraged agricultural education by financing livestock purchases by rural youth. The businessmen of

New Orleans conducted one of the popular "eat-more" campaigns.³⁹

Supplying agricultural credit was another project undertaken on the local or regional level. Southern businessmen and bankers offered a fine example of this in their action after the disastrous price failure of cotton in 1926. Here businessmen financed pools to buy cotton and remove it from the market. Significantly, they also demanded acreage reduction, often tying their assistance to pledges that less cotton would be raised in subsequent years. Textile manufacturers also participated in the rescue, and the general reaction prompted Secretary Mellon to commend such farmer-businessman cooperation.⁴⁰

National business organizations attacked

³⁴ The privately operated "\$10,000,000 Corporation" lent money to farmers and diversification was among the activities it supported. *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 118: 607-609 (February, 1924); 118: 1087, 1215-1216 (March, 1924); *Bank Letter*, February, 1925, 31; August, 1924, 122-123.

³⁵ *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 118: 1478 (March, 1924).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 117: 2165 (November, 1923); G. C. Jewett, "Wheat Man's Problem; a Way Out," *American Industries*, 24: 5-9 (November, 1923); W. M. Jardine, "The Farmer Is a Business Man," *Nation's Business*, 13: 12-16 (April, 1925); J. C. O'Loughlin, "Mr. Coolidge and American Business," 12: 17-19 (March, 1924).

³⁷ *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle* opposed cooperatives until 1927, when it began to praise the Danish cooperative system which involved not just marketing cooperatives, but a utopian reconstruction of agriculture centering around the rural community and adult education. For examples of both phases of the *Chronicle's* attitude, see editorials, 118: 2111-2112 (May, 1924); 120: 745-747 (February, 1925); 124: 1266-1267 (March, 1927); 125: 1240-1241 (September, 1927).

³⁸ J. H. Barnes, "Linking the Farm to the Factory," *Nation's Business*, 12: 46 (March, 1924); M. A. Stine, "When Farm and Factory Team Up," 14: 17-19 (July, 1926); *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 121: 2935 (December, 1925).

³⁹ E. N. Smith, "Teaming with the Farmer," *Nation's Business*, 11: 41-43 (April, 1923). *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle* objected even to "eat-more" campaigns, basing its stand on "professional health-lore." Editorial, 120: 1001 (February, 1925).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 123: 1825, 1949ff., 2064 (October, 1926); 123: 2470-2471, 2602ff. (November, 1926). Editorial, *Nation's Business*, 14: 28-29 (November, 1926), stresses the need to reduce cotton production.

the agricultural problem on a larger scale, usually through special study groups. The United States Chamber of Commerce and the American Bankers Association had both permanent and temporary, or specialized, agricultural commissions. As early as 1923, the Chamber of Commerce had a special group working on the wheat situation, and it was the same type of action that produced two almost epoch-making studies during the McNary-Haugen period. The first was the National Industrial Conference Board's *The Agricultural Problem in the United States*, published in 1926. The conclusions of this study must have been startling to many businessmen. The Board emphasized the fundamental importance of agriculture, forcefully asserted that it was in serious difficulty, and that the problem presented "a far-reaching question of national policy." Recognizing that all major economic groups had to make an earnest effort toward readjustment, the Board called for a further study to suggest "... possibilities and desirable avenues of remedy and readjustment."⁴¹

This further investigation was the work of the Business Men's Commission on Agriculture, appointed by the National Industrial Conference Board and the United States Chamber of Commerce. Its findings were published in 1927 under the title, *The Condition of Agriculture in the United States and Measures for Its Improvement*. This longer study reinforced the conclusions of the Board's earlier work. Although its recommendations were not so compelling as its analysis, it did guardedly suggest that, since the tariff was partly responsible for the farmer's difficulties, tariff duties should be adjusted.⁴²

The significance of the book lies, however, not so much in its actual recommendations as its evidence that businessmen were beginning to take the agricultural problem seriously. Such a study was bound to influence the thinking of many businessmen who had not previously felt that they needed to bother much about the farmer's lamentations. The events of the year following the publication of the book support this conclusion. A short time after the

Condition of Agriculture appeared, the United States Chamber of Commerce appointed a special committee to study the book and to report its findings to the board of directors of the National Chamber. The committee reported in May, 1928, and the directors ordered its recommendations to be circulated as a referendum among the local chambers. The referendum—which included resolutions that the protective tariff policy was applicable to agriculture, that cooperative marketing should be encouraged and supported, and that Congress create a Federal Farm Board—probably represented the most advanced business thinking on the agricultural question. Local Chambers approved the referendum overwhelmingly, thus putting organized business on the record just in time for the Hoover administration.⁴³

By 1928, then, businessmen had clarified their position considerably on the agricultural question. In resisting the pressure of the McNary-Haugenites, they had been forced to examine the question and to find alternatives. To justify their opinions, businessmen often had recourse to their basic

⁴¹ National Industrial Conference Board, *The Agricultural Problem in the United States*, 149-150 for quotations; Chapter 5 for summary of findings and conclusions.

⁴² Business Men's Commission on Agriculture, *The Condition of Agriculture in the United States and Measures for Its Improvement* (New York and Washington, 1927). The tariff recommendation declares that protective policies which tend to limit the market for agricultural goods and to increase the cost of their production, "... should be subjected to careful reconsideration with a view to equalizing their effects as between agriculture and manufacturing industries." (italics removed), 30. See 161-175 for a discussion of both the tariff and the McNary-Haugen bill, which the Commission rejected because it preferred a general lowering of duties to the effort to make the tariff effective for agriculture. For an expert contemporary opinion of the book, see John D. Black's review, *American Economic Review*, 18: 108-109 (March, 1928).

⁴³ W. Butterworth, "How Business Is Helping the Farmer," *Nation's Business*, 16: 87-88 (December, 1928); editorial, 16: 12 (December, 1928); *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 127: 2313 (October, 1928), gives the vote on the referendum. For a farm reaction to the passage of the referendum, see Henry Wallace, "Agriculture Welcomes Business's Aid," *Nation's Business*, 16: 88-90 (December, 1928).

social and political convictions, and an examination of these convictions as they emerged in the farm controversy is rewarding. These underlying assumptions of the businessmen were sometimes only implied, as in the case of Secretary Mellon's thesis regarding the relative importance of agricultural and industrial prosperity. Mellon held that it was not wise to increase farm prices if that increase would reduce industrial profits. Nor was Mellon alone in this opinion; the National City Bank feared that the McNary-Haugen plan would "... intensify all the industrial competition this country has to meet."⁴⁴ These observers obviously felt that the predominant interests of the nation were pretty much independent of agriculture, and that national policies should be based on that realization.

The National Industrial Conference Board's study specifically noted the secondary place that agriculture occupied in the United States. The industrial or business population, it said, had "... become preponderant not only in numbers but in interest, organization and influence, while agriculture has become only a relatively remote concern and its welfare largely taken for granted in urban thought."⁴⁵ While this development was certainly a departure from the time-honored tradition that agriculture was the backbone of the nation, businessmen had by no means abandoned Jeffersonianism. The Board was only stating what many businessmen held when it wrote:

Farming is more than an industry. The significance of agriculture in the life of the nation is far deeper than this. It touches something vital and fundamental in the national existence. It involves the national security, the racial character, the economic welfare and the social progress of our people.⁴⁶

The Commercial and Financial Chronicle, an intransigent foe of agricultural relief programs, was even more rhapsodically Jeffersonian. It pondered editorially what would happen to the self-reliant husbandman, whose preservation was "... vital not only to our industrial life but also to our civic life and to our form of government."⁴⁷

Still we may conclude that most of this attachment to the Jeffersonian ideal was pure romancing, and that it stemmed from devotion to the philosophy of individualism, rather than from a true appreciation of the farmer's situation. To one leading businessman, the Jeffersonian ideal was such a denatured thing that its values could be preserved so long as the "march of invention" enabled the citizen to provide his family with "open space and fresh air." The more-realistic businessmen held, not that the farmer should be the ideal, but that he should become a "businessman." Farmers, instead of being sturdy and self-reliant, were always crying for help—obviously they needed to learn business mobility and know-how. *The Iron Age* was, in fact, so uncharitable as to declare that the farmer needed "a guardian." The same low opinion of rural intelligence is apparent in the statement of a businessman who said that politicians easily misled the farmer with "a few catch phrases."⁴⁸ This farmer is clearly no prototype of the good citizen.

Another consideration which should reveal the businessman's real attachment to the Jeffersonian ideal is his attitude toward rural depopulation. If one considers the farmer the backbone of American democracy, one surely cannot view with complacency any flight from the land. Businessmen, however, almost universally treated

⁴⁴ *Bank Letter*, May, 1924, 72. See footnote 14, for other citations.

⁴⁵ National Industrial Conference Board, *The Agricultural Problem in the United States*, 1.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Foreword, v. Business Men's Commission on Agriculture, *The Condition of Agriculture in the United States*, 151-153, reflects the same attachment to Jeffersonianism.

⁴⁷ Editorial, *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 126: 3653 (June, 1928). This editorial argues against corporatized "factory farms."

⁴⁸ J. H. Barnes, "Is There a 'National' Farm Problem," *Nation's Business*, 15: 17 (January, 1927); *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 124: 2857-2858 (May, 1927); 121: 1866 (October, 1925); C. J. Baer, "Making the Farmer a Business Man," *American Industries*, 26: 36-38 (October, 1925); "Digest of the Business Press," *Nation's Business*, 14: 98 (March, 1926).

the question as a strictly economic one.⁴⁹ Only one or two articles adopted the ambivalent position of regretting to see abandoned farms while accepting the economic necessity which made it wisdom to leave them. Usually business commentators simply asserted that there were too many farmers, and that it was natural for the surplus to be eliminated. The title of an article in *The Nation's Business* sums up their attitude: "Abandoned Farms Don't Worry Me."⁵⁰ Some businessmen seemed to think that the farmers who were forced off the land were simply stupid, lazy, or inefficient. Nor were inefficient farmers to be coddled; the incompetent were advised to "... give up farming, and take jobs in the cities at day labor; such jobs require the minimum of intelligence and yet return a good wage. . . ."⁵¹

Businessmen recognized, of course that incompetence was not the only reason for leaving the farm. *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle* reminded them that city life was more comfortable, more interesting, and more financially rewarding than farming.⁵² Yet businessmen always seemed to suspect that a certain moral opprobrium attached to failure in farming. One concludes from Professor Prothro's study that the businessman of the 1920's believed that success was the reward of something very closely akin to moral virtue, and that failure was at least *prima facie* evidence of the lack of virtue.⁵³ Businessmen did appear to feel this way with respect to agriculture; it seemed to them that it was mostly the self-indulgent farmer who was in trouble. Wheat growers, for example, were one-crop farmers, and one-crop farming was the lazy man's way.⁵⁴ Moreover, the farmers who complained the most were those who lavished money on automobiles and other extravagances. And the argument that an automobile was practically a necessity in twentieth-century agriculture was easily disposed of: "Of course, he [the farmer] needs a motor vehicle, or he could not attend the 'movies' four times a week, and the boys could not 'burn up' the roads racing around to parties and fandangoes." High living stand-

ards must be earned by individual effort, the businessman asserted—the world did not owe any farmer an automobile or a radio.⁵⁵ Self-indulgence in the farmer was not just reprehensible in itself; it might prove dangerously contagious. *The Iron Age* discovered this menace lurking in the "eat-more" campaigns. Seek to eliminate the farmers' surpluses by asking people to eat more than they needed, and you handed them "... a direct invitation to profligacy in living. . . ."⁵⁶

The farmer's problem stimulated, however, a much more elevated moral discussion than this. *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle* chose in 1926 a higher morality which demanded "in justice" that farm prices remain low, so that "the pale-faced mother of the tenement" could feed her brood.⁵⁷ This required a type of heroic virtue that was quite beyond the farmer; but perhaps the leaders of business were

⁴⁹ *Bank Letter*, May, 1924, 71; April, 1925, 58; October, 1925, 174; "Nation's Business Observatory," *Nation's Business*, 11: 87-88 (March, 1923); W. Tufts, "Bunk! A Great American Industry," 12: 36-37 (May, 1924).

⁵⁰ This article, by J. Van Wagenen, Jr., *Ibid.*, 14:37-39 (June, 1926), is, oddly enough, one of the few which displays the ambivalent feeling noted. The author feels that the country "... can ill afford to lose a yeomanry trained to the virtues of thrift and industry." But from an economic point of view, he welcomes the decreasing farm population.

⁵¹ *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 124: 1761 (March, 1927).

⁵² Editorial, *ibid.*, 124: 2507-2508 (April, 1927).

⁵³ James W. Prothro, *The Dollar Decade: Business Ideas in the 1920's* (Baton Rouge, 1954), 33ff.

⁵⁴ Broadly hinted in G. R. Martin, "Don't Worry About the Northwest," *Nation's Business*, 12: 48-50 (February, 1924); editorial, *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 118: 1966-1967 (April, 1924).

⁵⁵ Editorial, *ibid.*, 123: 629 (August, 1926); J. H. Barnes, "Is There a 'National' Farm Problem," *Nation's Business*, 15: 19 (January, 1927). Three months later, however, *Nation's Business* noted that most farmers were frugal and hard working: "Do Farmers Prefer Flivvers," 15: 84 (April, 1927).

⁵⁶ "Nation's Business Observatory," *ibid.*, 11: 79-80 (October, 1923).

⁵⁷ Editorials, *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 123: 128-129 (July, 1926); 123: 761-764 (August, 1926).

capable of such altruism, for it had already been hinted that they were a superior caste. In discussing a program in which business leaders and farm-organization representatives were trying to solve the farm problem, Julius Barnes declared that if any effective action could be taken "this committee of sane and responsible leaders" could suggest it.⁵⁸ Since businessmen seemed to distrust farm leaders most of the time, it must have been the presence of businessmen which lent sanity and responsibility to the committee.

Indeed, businessmen seemed to think of themselves as the best qualified advisers of the farmer. Barnes particularly warned farmers not to trust politicians. In an article called "What Price Demagogy," he contrasted business efforts in the farmer's behalf with the damage politicians had done by alleging that the market had been rigged in 1924, and that farmers had better sell their crops before the election.⁵⁹ Almost all business writers agreed that politicians were unreliable and low-minded. They were governed, businessmen thought, by stupidity, fear, and selfish ambition. The business press was studded with references to "self-seeking politicians" who were looking for "political gain," and who could be generically classified as "radical comedians."⁶⁰

Businessmen did not think much more of farm-organization leaders, who "... find it profitable to live on their theories and perhaps upon their salaries."⁶¹ This group shared not only the politician's ulterior motive, but also his essential error—that the situation could be remedied by legislation, that the government could help the farmer. *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle* exposed the fallacy of this idea in a long editorial fittingly sub-titled "A Lesson."⁶² There was very little that was new in the lesson: *laissez-faire* individualism furnished the bedrock of premises, and the gospel of work lent a note of fervor. After alluding to the intention of the founding fathers, and explaining the equilibrium maintained by the "immutable laws of being," the *Chronicle* warned solemnly that "When politics invades economics it de-

stroys our birthright." Then, calling for a return of "frugality, tolerance and independence," the editorial ended on a hopeful note: "Favoring seasons bless the farmer; favoring environment blesses us all; work will bring plenty and peace."

How many businessmen really believed in frugality in the days of ballyhoo advertising and installment buying is open to question. It was no doubt clear to many of them that economic liberalism did not jibe with the facts of life in the industrial world of the 1920's. As a guide to practical action, individualism was dead; but as a myth it was very much alive. Capitalistic practice had completely outstripped the theoretical framework within which it was supposed to take place; individualism remained the businessman's only rationale, outmoded though it was. When first confronted by the problem in agriculture, a field in which they had no practical experience to guide them, businessmen naturally fell back on their theoretical individualism, and "solved" the problem by a pedantic application of the laws of economics. Nor could they always remain patient and reasonable; their moral sensibilities, as well as their economic orthodoxy, were outraged. Honesty, industry, initiative, fair-play—all these virtues and many others clustered around the doctrinal core of individualism. When the doctrine was violated, businessmen were likely to believe that the violator was not so much misguided as depraved, and their reaction was a moral one.

The farmer's conduct in the 1920's was

⁵⁸ J. H. Barnes, "Dollar Wheat," *Nation's Business*, 11: 14 (September, 1923).

⁵⁹ J. H. Barnes, "What Price Demagogy," *ibid.*, 13: 15-17 (February, 1925).

⁶⁰ For typical expressions in a single volume of *Nation's Business*, see "Digest of the Business Press," 14: 84 (February, 1926); J. Van Wageningen, Jr., "Abandoned Farms Don't Worry Me," 14: 39 (June, 1926); S. R. McKelvie, "One Thing Law Making Can Do for the Farmer," 14: 21 (September, 1926); editorial, 14: 28 (November, 1926).

⁶¹ Editorial, *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, 123: 128 (July, 1926).

⁶² Editorial ("The Farmer's Prosperity Independent of Government Aid—A Lesson"), *ibid.*, 118: 2363-2364 (May, 1924).

especially shocking, for he was the central figure of the Jeffersonian tradition who had been celebrated as a giant of individualism and virtue for more than a century. When the self-reliant farmer reneged on his individualism and clamored for the paternalistic McNary-Haugen bill, many businessmen were scandalized. But when the farmers, unchastened by rebuke, continued their pressure for relief, businessmen began to search for the reasons. They found that

the agricultural situation was exceedingly complex, that rousing slogans were not enough, and that they would have to abandon many of their ideological preconceptions before they could meet the problem intelligently. No doubt the discovery was painful; many businessmen refused to accept it at all. For those who did accept the discovery, it was only a beginning—a beginning they had been forced into making, but still a significant step forward.

HORSES OF CALIFORNIA

It is an old saying—"show me the company a man keeps, and I will show you the man." Much the same might be said of horses—especially California horses; for, in some sense they fairly represent the people. Indeed the comparison will apply in most countries. For instance, a hardier race of men for mountain life than those who live in Canada cannot be found, and their horses have similar characteristics. Well, go from Canada to Boston, where the Yankees are remarkable for their go-a-headitiveness; they have the fastest trotting working horses you ever saw. Go to New York, and you will find the same observation. Proceed to Pennsylvania, where you meet heavy men, slow, but sure; their horses, in their animal nature are exact counterparts. In California, the horses are rather below the medium size, light build, but finer riding animals are not to be found in any country, or animals that have better bottom. The Californians ride them on the gallop from morning till night, although the horses are too tightly girthed—the worst feature in a California saddle. The distress occasioned by this practice soon tells on the animal. It is a practice both useless and dangerous, except when followed in lassoing. It is owing to the use of these tight girths that we see so many sore-backed horses; they are ridden until they are very hot and yet are allowed no chance of cooling, occasioning inflammation. The California saddle is the best ever invented, although at first it looks clumsy. The bridle bits are useful for lassoing and driving, but sadly ruin the mouth. They draw a horse up quick, and thereby strain the postern joints, as may be frequently observed.

The California horse is only fit for the saddle; he is too fiery to be used in harness. We require American horses for farming, draught and similar purposes.—The Sydney horse is rather too slow, but will suit draymen better than any other, having greater weight. One thing, however, is to be said—they cannot stand the mud so well in winter time as a "blooded" animal. Those who import good stallions may rely upon having made a safe investment, for there is daily a greater demand for them. Before the year '50 and '51, people were ignorant of the nature of the aboriginal horse of this country. At that time I could buy a good American horse for \$60, whereas now it would fetch \$150. If the wild mares of the plains were crossed with a good American stud, they might produce a good breed, but they must be enclosed and not allowed to mix with the wild studs on the plains. Besides, the colts require to be handled while young in order that they may be tame and useful afterwards. Most farmers now find it necessary to raise their own horses, for they pay better than any other kind of stock. (San Francisco, Calif., March 13, 1853)

—Joel Clayton in *The Golden Era*

Book Reviews

The Response To Industrialism: 1885-1914. By SAMUEL P. HAYES. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957, viii, 211 pp. \$3.50.)

The need for brief, succinct accounts of crucial phases of American civilization has become pronounced, especially for the undergraduate if not more advanced student, who seems to be harassed by the ponderous volumes of the scholarly profession. This, as well as the desire to incorporate the latest research into small, compact volumes, is what probably inspired the University of Chicago Press to launch its American civilization series.

The Response To Industrialism: 1885-1914 encompasses a truly dynamic period in the history of the nation, a period in which industrialism left its unmistakable impact on all facets of our civilization. The changes to which the various segments of our society were subjected are arrayed in abbreviated form before the reader, and the various devices employed in coping with these changes are treated on a broader scale. The reactions of organized labor, agriculture, small businessmen, religious leaders, humanitarians, reformers, feminists, and Progressives to these changes are a matter of common knowledge to the profession. Neither the author nor the sponsors presume that the materials contained in these pages are original. Within its limitations the book is a convenient summary of the period, with appended bibliographical notes; as well as some curious omissions of pertinent works.

The major criticism of the volume stems from the exclusive reliance on secondary works, and some of the questionable generalizations that have been drawn. In other words the author is at his best in factual presentation, and less at home when it comes to incisive analysis and interpretation. The more one studies some of his observations the more one wonders whether he actually means what he says.

In the agricultural sphere he indirectly acknowledges the conflicting interests of the producers, but writes as if the farmers were one harmonious family viewing their difficulties from the same perspective. One also doubts if any substantial majority of

the producers calculated costs and prices with business-like efficiency, and joined together in dealing with powerful market forces. At best this remained an unfulfilled aspiration rather than an accomplished fact, certainly during the period from 1885 to 1914.

The author is quite right in stating that the panic of 1873 and the early depression of the 1870s attracted new members for the Grange, but he is treading on questionable ground in minimizing the social, cultural, and educational features that gave the order enduring strength. The appeal that the social phases held out to the farmers' families is something that frequently is overlooked by urban residents. Except in the field of insurance, the business program of the Grange offered more cause for losing members than attracting them.

Much is made of the problems created by the new price-market relationship, but the presentation of this is far from reassuring to the reader. We are also told in rather positive terms that, "Only when the farmer in the twentieth century forged his cooperative commodity organizations did he develop the independent economic power, under his control, that enabled him to cope effectively with the price-and-market system." One can hardly accept this at face value. There were few commodity organizations that could make such legitimate claims prior to the First World War; and if such associations existed, they were unlikely to be found among the producers of "sick crops" such as wheat and cotton. Even during the 1920's, the heyday of the cooperatives, such a sweeping generalization would require serious qualification.

Theodore Saloutos
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Los Angeles

Fifty Years of Farm Management. By H. C. M. CASE and D. B. WILLIAMS. (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1957, ix, 386 pp., \$6.00.)

This volume traces developments in farm management research, teaching, and extension from the turn of the century up

through 1950. The following eight chapter headings indicate fairly well the contents of the book:

1. Introduction
2. Pioneer Farm Management Research
3. Defining and Establishing the Field
4. The Advent of the Economists
5. Reappraisal After World War I
6. The Role of Farm Management in National Planning and Adjustment
7. Wartime Farm Management and Post-war Trends
8. Farm Management in Retrospect and in Prospect

The senior author has been actively engaged in farm management work during all except the first 15 years of the half century covered by the book. He became well acquainted with the early pioneers during their active years, and himself participated in some of the pioneering efforts, especially in development of farm management extension. The Australian background of the junior author enabled him to approach the early developments in this country with a fresh viewpoint, and his work as a graduate student gave him an opportunity to analyze recent progress in the field. This combination of authorship resulted in a competent and sympathetic survey of developments over the entire period.

Although most of the book deals with subjects usually considered within the field of farm management, some attention is given to related developments in agricultural economics, especially in economics of production. But the authors do not attempt an all-inclusive survey of the growth of agricultural economics such as was undertaken by the Taylors in *The Story of Agricultural Economics*. Case and Williams also cover a somewhat different time span. They give less attention to the early stirrings on economic problems of agriculture, and they end their review with 1950 instead of 1932.

This book will give to graduate students, younger staff members, and all other workers in economics of production who have not previously covered this ground, a good appreciation of the contributions made by the pioneers. "... There were giants in those days,"—intellectual giants. Spill-

man, Warren, and Boss recognized the need for coordinating science that would aid the farmer in organizing and operating the farm as a whole. They were considered "rebels" by their fellow workers in the natural sciences. Taylor and Carver, and Black somewhat later, pioneered in adapting the science of economics to farm production problems.

With the clarity of vision which hindsight usually provides, it is easy to criticize the accomplishments of the pioneers. They explored many blind alleys. Some placed too much emphasis on ascertaining unit costs of production; others on general farm management surveys, or on farm accounts. Their sampling methods were inadequate. The early case studies were incomplete and inconclusive. But we must remember the stage of development of the science when these steps were taken. The challenge to workers now is to recognize the solid parts of the foundation that has been laid, to avoid repeating the same mistakes, to improve research methodology, and to go forward in helping farmers solve their economic problems.

In the latter part of the period covered, this reviewer would have given more emphasis to emergency program contributions that were made by workers in farm management. It seems doubtful that the AAA, FCA, and other programs of the 1930's could have been carried forward if we had not been able to build on the research and extension foundation that had been developed by that time. And we must not forget the leadership furnished by Wilson, Tolley, Hutson, Tapp, and others, in the early AAA years; and by Myers, Hill, Arnold, and others in FCA. Those in charge of the rural rehabilitation program (originally organized in FERA) called on farm management specialists to adapt farm budgeting techniques to their case work in farm and home planning with relief clients.

Similar comments could be made concerning participation of farm management workers during World War II. The entire staff of the Division of Farm Management and Costs of the BAE was commandeered for the war effort. The wartime Production

Capacity Studies conducted in cooperation with the Land-Grant colleges constituted a part of the wartime activities. The authors mention the "war unit program" and the participation of farm management workers in efficient use of farm labor. Analyses also were made of efficient use of other resources in the war effort, including development of feed-livestock balances, and suggested ways of obtaining more milk and other food products in short supply.

In the review of activities in the 1940's, more emphasis might have been given to studies of the impacts of technological developments. Such studies have constituted a major line of work in the Department of Agriculture from 1944 onward, and important new measures of changes in farming have been developed.

Considering the entire period under review, the major developments are well covered. Teachers of graduate classes will use this book, together with pertinent sections of *The Story of Agricultural Economics*, and *Salter's Critical Review of Research in Land Economics*, to provide a historical perspective for students in economics of production.

Sherman E. Johnson
U. S. Dept of Agriculture

The Federal Lands: Their Use and Management. By MARION CLAWSON and BURNELL HELD. (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957, xxi, 501 pp., \$8.50).

Clawson and Held have presented an excellent historical picture of land acquisition as it has been practiced by our federal government. The procedure that has been followed is described and documented so that the book becomes a valuable reference aid to anyone interested in the public lands problem.

The authors discuss the various laws that pertain to federal lands in such manner as to enlighten the reader. They carefully point out the influence that vested interests have had and will no doubt continue to have in the matter of legislation pertaining to these natural resources under federal control.

Multiple use of federal lands is clearly described and its benefits and limitations are discussed. It is pointed out that there is great dependence of the Western livestock industry upon the grazing resources of governmental properties and of the general good that results to the public from such use. Likewise ample treatment is given the value of proper use of other resources such as timber, hard minerals, oil, and recreational facilities. It is rightly maintained that proper management can lead to improvement rather than to degradation of most resources. The authors have shown that if multiple use is properly practiced, often wildlife production, recreational values, and the total value to society can be enhanced.

Consideration is given the organizational pattern of the various agencies that have jurisdiction over federal lands. The development and function of the agencies is well described.

Income from federal lands is documented in considerable detail. More important to the reader is the description of the philosophy behind the letting of bids on various types of federal resources to private individuals and to corporations. It is pointed out that greater revenue could be obtained and that it would be possible to initiate policies that would result in the government receiving a return on its investment in addition to upkeep and development charges.

A very real problem to the public land states has been that of deriving income to maintain state and local governments. This vital problem is given some treatment. People who do not fully appreciate this dilemma should especially study this portion of the book to appreciate more fully this oft neglected problem when public lands are acquired and taken from tax rolls.

The most thought-provoking portion of the book is that which discusses the "New Era." This deals with future plans that would overcome past shortcomings in federal management. It is suggested that a Federal Land Corporation be established to deal with federal properties. The authors realize that there will be much difficulty encountered in getting such a revolutionary

change in management adopted at the national level. With this in mind they suggest less drastic changes that should lead to improvement; these are: (1) changes in agencies with changing times, (2) administrative reorganization, (3) a permanent land review board, and (4) more agency latitude in budget management.

The authors have attempted to be objective in their appraisal of a great national problem. Reading of the book is commended to those who would attempt to improve their knowledge of our federal land problems. The student of the problem will appreciate the documentation of the subject. The repetition of facts in different portions of the book tends to dull casual reader interest but is no doubt necessary if the book is to accomplish its purpose for the person who is really vitally concerned with the subject of our federal lands and how they can be most advantageously handled.

H. M. Briggs

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The Brazilian Cotton Manufacture. By STANLEY J. STEIN. (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1957, xii, 273 pp., \$5.00.)

The key to the principal theme of *The Brazilian Cotton Manufacture* lies hidden in its sub-title: "Textile Enterprise in an Underdeveloped Area, 1850-1950." The inference that the Brazilian economy remained essentially "underdeveloped" during the entire century is, moreover, reinforced in the final chapter of "Summary and Conclusions" by the explicit observation "that in some respects the cotton manufacture in Brazil was a developed segment of an underdeveloped economy" (p. 186). The almost eloquent silence about any other industry, as well as the frequent reference to the handicap of a cotton manufacture continuously dependent upon imported textile machinery, and at times even upon foreign markets for its outlets, confirm the impression of an industry both isolated from and dominated by an agricultural, and especially coffee, economy. Even the recurring crises of both agriculture and industry

in Brazil reveal the lack of real integration and interdependence between them.

Aside from its intrinsic merits as an excellent and exhaustive exercise in modern industrial history, this treatise offers a double object-lesson in the stream of comparative industrial development. On the one hand, it illustrates the similarities and relationships between the Brazilian case and the more fortunate ones in Europe and America. On the other hand, it points up the persistent handicaps and obstacles which have tended to retard, if not prevent, industrialization, not only of Brazil, but also of similar, so-called underdeveloped areas at all stages. The closing date of this study, 1950, leaves the Brazilian cotton manufacture in the midst of another characteristic crisis, following the abnormal and artificial wartime and post-war expansion. In the light of the current world-wide concern with the potential or actual industrialization of underdeveloped regions, one wishes Dr. Stein had included the more recent years, and perhaps provided further evidence as to whether this was only another cycle revealing the strains and difficulties in breaking out of the hard shell of economic backwardness. Or is this a new era, in which wider and more determined national aspirations and economic efforts have come to characterize such areas, offering greater promise of fulfillment?

Specifically, however, and aside from its ultimate value as a general object-lesson, this treatise traces the troubled course of cotton manufacture in Brazil through three successive stages, in as many parts. The first part, comprising six chapters, relates the birth pangs of the industry during the first half century, 1840-1890. The Empire was still in existence, and its economic and ideological orientation toward agriculture, industrial imports, and free trade provided the limiting context. The opportunities and actualities of the new industry are examined in fulness of detail, and in terms of the size and character of the market, available raw material, labor, capital, and business enterprise.

The transition from Empire to Republic after 1889, accompanied by a shift of

thought and attitude toward a more nationalistic policy of protection, introduced a second phase, which is covered in Part II, for the period, 1890-1930. Three chapters deal respectively and successively with the joint role of "industry and government;" the expansion and geographical shift of the industry southwards during "the golden years," and the "onset of depression" after 1929. In two chapters of Part III, Dr. Stein analyzes the intricacies, both political and economic, of the cotton industry during "the crisis of the thirties," followed by the boom and recession resulting from the "war and its aftermath."

A reader not directly concerned, or familiar with the Brazilian scene, is, nevertheless, bound to be greatly impressed and enlightened by the nice balance and skillful interweaving of detail and generalization. He may be somewhat bemused, or bewildered, by the wide and apparently unaccountable fluctuations in the value of the Brazilian *conto*, when converted into dollars, as reported with a few years (pp. 28-34). A clarifying explanation might have helped remove the confusion. In every respect, the narrative rests upon a solid base of statistical data and an ample bibliography of manuscript and printed materials, in both Portuguese and English. Furthermore, a voluminous collection of footnotes, assembled with the rest of this scholarly apparatus at the back of the book, bears abundant witness to the use of these materials. Altogether this study of the Brazilian cotton industry constitutes a welcome and important, if perhaps unorthodox contribution, to the "Studies in Entrepreneurial History," sponsored by the Research Center in Entrepreneurial History of Harvard University.

Samuel Rezneck
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Dakota Territory, 1861-1889: A Study of Frontier Politics. By HOWARD ROBERTS LAMAR. Yale Historical Publications, Miscellany 64. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1956, x, 304 pp., \$4.50.)

This is a political history of the "last agricultural and mining frontier," Dakota

Territory, from its organization in 1861 to the achievement of statehood by both North Dakota and South Dakota in 1889. Following an honored tradition in American history, the author emphasizes the local situation, although he mentions outside factors and draws comparisons with other sections of the country. In stressing the importance of government he explains: "It was the settler's use of government on the spot, and not necessarily a government policy, which was the key factor in settlement" (page ix). Thus "a new technique of conquering nature and controlling the Indian was worked out" (page viii).

Two background topics introduce the volume. A useful summary traces the territorial policy of the United States in general, starting with the steps for attaining statehood provided in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. The third of three historical periods of this policy, 1860 to 1912, is characterized as "an era of absolute control" in which "the government ran the territories as they would a passive group of colonial mandates" (page 5). There follows a brief history of the Upper Missouri Plains Regions in the 1850's and the moves toward territorial organization.

Most of the book is devoted to the details of political maneuvering, elections, legislation, and the moves toward statehood in the Dakota territory. In a few pen portraits the author describes the transplanted New England Protestant Republicans who were the youthful "loud and lusty" (page 80) first territorial legislators, then traces the political changes which came with immigration and economic fluctuations and growth. Of much interest is the discussion of the diverse sectional factions within the territory and the complicated motivation in the several phases of the movement toward statehood.

Economic history is sketched briefly as a background for political life. In the early 1860's Indian scares, grasshoppers, drought, lack of railroads, and the "lingering belief in the Great American Desert legend" (page 98) all delayed agricultural settlement. Connection with government was almost by necessity a way of life. Late in

the decade new immigrants began to arrive, bringing in different backgrounds, a development which, with the first import of Eastern capital and good crops, affected both the economy and politics. After the depression and grasshoppers of the middle 1870's came years of rapid growth. Railroad miles opened up markets. Wool production in the southeastern counties, cattle ranching along the Missouri, wheat from bonanza farms in the Red River Valley, and gold in the Black Hills changed the political balance of power of various sections. Then came hard winters and drought in the late 1880's.

The author relates the political reaction of farmers in the late 1880's to a local historical pattern. Although he refers to national economic causes which provoked the farmer's discontent, yet he sees "a strong stimulus to" the Farmers' Alliance in the people's conviction that the territorial system was "inadequate and corrupt" (compare pages ix and 207). His thesis is that the economic importance of government growing out of the environment in the long territorial period had set precedents which "made a political approach to an economic problem neither reactionary nor radical, but logically dictated by these precedents . . ." (pages ix and x). These set the pattern for the policy of the Farmers' Alliance and later developments, including the present state-owned enterprises.

At several points in the book some readers will differ on emphasis. This reviewer thinks that the analysis of motivation is revealing but believes that the author has dwelt on human skulduggery rather than on human strength. Some of his value judgments on motivation appear too positive for the evidence adduced. He refers to the "vital role the railroad played in shaping the Territory's political and economic history" (page 127), but there is little on the contribution of rail lines to settlement and practically nothing on their diversified aid to farmers during the eighties, undoubtedly a policy motivated by self-interest but an enlightened one. Maps of the Dakota territory for 1872 and 1882 helpfully point up the changes in transportation over a dec-

ade, although the point is underplayed by omitting the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba.

The author has given little credit to the individual spirit, imagination, and risk taking, which played a role in improving the cultivation of the land, settling the towns, and peopling an underdeveloped area in preparation for statehood. On the other hand, the reader can be grateful that the author has organized a mass of factual material on early politics in Dakota, provided careful summaries to clarify his main points, and contributed a thesis to provoke thought.

Muriel E. Hidy
Business History Foundation, Inc.

English Peasant Farming. By JOAN THIRSK. (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957, 350 pp., 40s.)

Post-war English historians have been very interested in the problems of agrarian history and this interest has resulted in the foundation of the British Agricultural History Society. The stress which social and economic historians have laid, during the last generation, upon regionalism has inspired a new agrarian history which has also accepted influences from geography, botany and prehistory. British historical scholarship is also beginning, at long last, to realize the importance of the sociological concepts introduced into the study of the mediaeval village by Professor G. C. Homans and is about to take serious notice of demography. All these interests, together with an impartiality and a balanced outlook which the radical historians of earlier generations so often lacked, make modern British agrarian history.

Dr. Joan Thirsk's book exemplifies fully most of these aspects of her subject and is typical of the careful research now proceeding. She makes a survey of the agrarian history of Lincolnshire from Tudor times to the outbreak of the Great War of 1914-18, treating the county by its farming regions—the Fenland, the Marshland, the chalk and limestone uplands, and the claylands and miscellaneous soils. She describes accurately the geographical, geological and

ecological peculiarities of each region and refers briefly to its early settlement history. She then considers the regions by historical periods and compares them with each other during the sixteenth century, 1600-1740, 1740-1870 and 1870-1914. This method brings out the individuality of English farming regions in a most striking fashion and kills once and for all the desire to generalize about the fate of particular social classes over the whole country. This is a great victory for local history.

The main topics in each historical period are necessarily similar. The author first considers population trends both as reflecting the prosperity of the region and as helping to decide the social structure and the type of crops grown and animals reared. After careful study of the differing environments of her regions, she makes certain that preoccupation with the soil does not lead to the mortal sin of geographical determinism. She is fully aware that the environment is not an agent but a mere passive condition which human ingenuity can over-ride, and that though its influence may be very considerable, and even decisive, there are periods and places when history runs strongly counter to geography, and in which man's needs, ambitions, and the techniques at his command make the fens and heaths alike bear abundant crops. The colonization of the waste is a notable part of the writer's theme.

Dr. Thirsk has also spent much time and skill upon suitable analyses of the sizes and frequency of holdings in the various farming regions. The contrast between the minute fragmentation of holdings in the Fenland and in Axholme and the great estates of Highland Lincolnshire is very marked. Dr. Thirsk finds part of the reason for this contrast in the settlement of Lincolnshire by numerous small Danish peasants early in the tenth century and part in the immense commons of bountiful fen pasture whose enjoyment caused this peasantry to flourish mightily, as nowhere else in England. Their prosperity in times of bitterness and despair has excited the wonder and curiosity of many older writers but has never received so cool and clear an analysis.

Dr. Thirsk also considers the crops and

herds of the different farming regions. Probate inventories and manorial surveys provide the staple of her sixteenth and seventeenth century material and later figures come from government surveys. Frequent and valuable comparisons are made with the similar figures made by Dr. W. G. Hoskins for Leicestershire.

Dr. Thirsk writes clearly, persuasively and precisely, in an unadorned style, enlivened by well-chosen quotations from original sources. Most of her evidence is from manuscript material whose treatment has cost a great deal of time and labor, yet the sweat involved is not too apparent. No preconceived political or economic theories invade the pages of this book and the writer has a transparent honesty about the validity or adequacy of her sources which many more dogmatic historians would do well to copy. Dr. Thirsk is able to sympathize with all classes of bygone Lincolnshire society, is not insensitive to the wrongs of the laboring poor in times of distress, but refuses to allow anger to color her judgments. She writes in the best style of post-war English economic history.

The book is attractively produced and contains eight excellent maps and four photographic plates. The text is singularly correct and there is a useful index.

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The Frontier In Perspective. Edited with an introduction and notes by WALKER D. WYMAN and CLIFTON B. KROEBER. (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1957, xx, 300 pp., \$5.50.)

Six-and-a-half decades will soon have passed since Frederick Jackson Turner historically called attention to the significance the frontier had played in American history. And what fruitful years these have been for American historiography! In the summer of 1954, a group of scholars returned to Turner's Alma Mater to assess what had happened to the place of the frontier in the nation's history after a half century of historical research. Of the lectures that were given on the general theme

of "Wisconsin Reconsiders the Frontier," a baker's dozen were chosen for inclusion in this volume. The editors rather optimistically suggested that the contributors employ Turner's thesis as a reference point for their articles.

These essays have naturally been divided into two parts entitled "The World Frontier" and "The American Frontier." Somewhat ironically—Turner never recommended the wide application of his thesis to other frontiers—more than half of the writers on world frontiers discern substantial validity in the Turner thesis. Paul L. MacKendrick believes the thesis of immense utility in fathoming the colonial expansion of the Romans. However, the Mexican historian, Silvio Zavala, does not share MacKendrick's enthusiasm for the Turner thesis when applied to Hispanic frontiers. Much more probing is needed, especially where the frontiers of Mexico and the United States touch, before any definite conclusions can be reached, Zavala assures us.

A. L. Burt, in an incisive and well evolved essay, points out that the French frontier, contrary to the assumptions of many historians, was fairly democratic. How could it help but be, writes Professor Burt, for in the New World there was competition between seigniors for tenants whereas in the Old World it was between peasants for land possessed by seigniors.

A. Lobanov-Rostovsky and Eugene Boardman consider next the Turner thesis in the light of Russian and Chinese expansion. A basic contradiction appears in their arguments; Lobanov-Rostovsky perceives the Turner thesis as equally suitable to both the Siberian and Chinese frontiers, while Boardman states the thesis does not apply to China, for the Chinese frontier was generally fixed and provided little outlet for the masses. On the basis of evidence offered most readers will be inclined to go along with Boardman.

Concluding this section, Walter P. Webb again flings the Turner thesis (the new application of which the editors are inclined to dub the "Webb thesis") out of provincial context and uses it in explaining the de-

velopment of four hundred years of world history.

One wonders whether another fifty years of intensive research will not dim the ardor of many scholars for the Turner thesis' relevancy to world frontiers in the same manner that it has disenchanted many investigators of the American frontier.

The second section on "The American Frontier" was a distinct disappointment. Thomas P. Abernethy and Paul W. Gates, two battle-scarred antagonists of the frontier thesis, once more parade the twin specters of land speculation and plantation aristocracy as evidence that the frontier was not nearly as democratic as Turner believed. Their articles are followed by four essays—of uneven merit—on frontier culture authored by Walter A. Agard, Frederic G. Cassidy, Henry Nash Smith and A. Irving Halliwell.

This reviewer questions the wisdom of selecting two prominent critics of the Turner thesis and appropriating a third of the book for the cultural aspects of the frontier, while ignoring the many-faceted outgrowths which the frontier has had on the political and economic development of America.

Certainly the work of such men as Fulmer Mood, John D. Barnhart, Fred Shannon, Merle Curti, Ray A. Billington and David Potter—to name six—are worthy of notation, for it seems any balanced reconsideration of the American frontier demands the incorporation of at least some of their viewpoints. Within this prescribed limitation, *The Frontier In Perspective* may be read with measurable benefit, however, a more apropos title might have been "Some Aspects of the Frontier, Partially Reconsidered."

Gene M. Gressley
University of Wyoming

The Vale of Trent, 1670-1800: A Regional Study of Economic Change. By J. D. CHAMBERS. (London, Cambridge University Press, Economic History Review Supplements, No. 3, 1957, 63 pp., 8/-.)

Here is an excellent example of what a regional study can contribute in enriching,

or modifying, our treatment of a larger theme. Mr. Chambers' region is compact; varied in its agricultural, pastoral, mineral, and industrial resources—not forgetting Sherwood Forest; and fairly well knit together, as well as connected with the outside world, by the Trent and its tributaries. It therefore "reflected most of the contemporary currents of economic change and it presents the same kinds of questions with which the student of the national economy is confronted, but in a less complex form and in a simpler setting" (p. 2). In addition, it is rich in parish registers of baptisms, marriages, and funerals, "those short and simple annals of the poor, providing a continuous record of that ceaseless two-way traffic of bodies into the churchyard and babies from the font—the favourable balance of which alone makes history of any kind possible" (p. 19).

Mr. Chambers has studied many sources of these registers with inexhaustible patience, rare analytical skill, and full awareness of their "inherent imperfections." The results are presented in tables and many graphs. Having got his demographic story for the period, he has drawn on an equally large body of printed and manuscript contemporary sources for the economic picture, then put the two together to reveal a series of secular ebbs and flows. From 1690-1720 population and economic enterprise alike expanded; then came economic "deceleration" and, in some years, "actual retreat on the demographic side" till the 1740's; then "a period of activity in all directions on such a scale and with such sustained strength that it presages the birth of a new age" (p. 3).

In propounding explanations of the population trends Mr. Chambers rejects some which have found favor with other writers, especially the devastating influence "of dearth upon mortality." Instead he attributes far more importance to a variety of epidemics—typhus, smallpox, dysentery, ague, influenza, and the like—which between them gave the population its "peri-

odical pruning" even in years of abundant food and low prices and checked growth almost as seriously as the now-vanished great plague had done. Though the reasons for the upsurge after 1750 remain "far from clear," they seem to be connected with the increasing immunity of children (and maybe of adults) to some epidemics; earlier marriages and larger families in the now expanding industrial areas; migration to those areas from purely agricultural districts where a large fraction of the hired farm workers "lived in with their masters," married later, and had fewer offspring. Thus there was "a reciprocal stimulation of economic and demographic forces" (p. 63), and, with one exception, "a rough equilibrium between them" which kept the demand for labor equal to the supply of it. The exception was the ill-fated framework knitting industry, which was bedevilled by stagnation in organization and market demand, as well as by a combination of abundant cheap labor and a long tradition of machine-wrecking which made employers unwilling, or afraid, to seek mechanical innovations. The Luddite Riots began in the Vale of Trent.

Mr. Chambers traces clearly the place of agriculture in this changing pattern. In the good decades before 1720 landlords improved their estates and ploughed some of their income into tapping mineral deposits. In the lean middle period, when population was at a standstill or declining, the harvest usually good, and the price level low, landlords and tenants alike experienced acute depression. When, however, the better times came as prices recovered and population increased once more, enclosures, reclamation of waste lands, turnip cultivation, and all those other well-known features of the "Agricultural Revolution" made their appearance, but apparently did not wreak the havoc on the small farmer and laborer which has all too often darkened the descriptions of that Revolution.

Herbert Heaton
University of Minnesota

Book Briefs

A Short History of New York State. By DAVID M. ELLIS, JAMES A. FROST, HAROLD C. SYRETT, and HARRY J. CARMAN. (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1957, xiii, 705 pp., \$7.75.)

This general account of all aspects of New York's history from colonial times to the present, while more appropriate for use as a synthesis or text, contains much material to interest the historian of agriculture. Each of the contributors takes farming influences into account, but the four substantial chapters devoted to agricultural matters are the work of two of the authors. Professor Ellis is responsible for three chapters dealing with the pre-Civil War period. The landholding system and its profound influence on the social, economic, and political development of colonial New York is the subject of the first. The second is the story of pioneer farming during the Federalist period, in many ways typical of other early agricultural efforts. The peculiar and special nature of New York's agriculture began to evolve as modern forms of transportation connected farms with urban centers and at the same time brought the west into competition. Professor Ellis discusses this in his chapter on "The Rise of the Dairy State" from 1825 to 1860. Dean Carman focusses on the agricultural development of New York since the Civil War in "Agriculture in the Empire State." He shows how the complex economic factors of the past ninety years have shaped this development, bringing increased specialization, technical innovations, scientific agriculture, marketing problems, interdependence between farmers and other groups in the economy, cooperative marketing efforts, abandonment of farms and other dislocations. These chapters on agriculture and the work as a whole are written with many vivid details and examples that provide a convincing basis for broad syntheses and conclusions. There are no footnotes, but a thirty-five page bibliographical essay gives suggestions for further reading in special fields including agricultural history.

Gertrude Almy Slichter
University of Illinois

Survey of Agricultural Libraries in England and Scotland. (London, Royal Agricultural Society of England, 1957, 75 pp., 12s, 6d.)

This survey should be quite useful to any history scholar about to undertake a research project which may involve the use of British agricultural literature sources. All the important agricultural libraries of England, Wales and Scotland are described, with notes on special collections. The scope of each library, its total book stock, loan policies, classification systems, catalogues, and other worthwhile bits of information are included. A fairly adequate index is appended.

D. A. Brown
University of Illinois

The American Farmer in 1954. By GOVE HAMBIDGE. (U. S. Census of Agriculture, 1954, Vol. III, Pt. 7. Washington, D. C., Government Printing Office, 1957, 57 pp., 40 cents.)

The five-year census reports of American agriculture which have been appearing since 1925 are, with the older decennial series, standard source materials for agricultural and economic historians. Not often, however, does one of these publications assume the character of a readable essay, as is the case with this special report by Gove Hambidge. Mr. Hambidge, editor of a number of the well-known Yearbooks of Agriculture, writes almost in a primer style as he demonstrates why American agriculture is not what it used to be and proves it with "cold facts." This little monograph provides a quick view of several types of American farmers, with graphic explanations of how they arrived at this particular point in the mid-twentieth century.

D. A. Brown
University of Illinois

The Old Farmer's Almanac Sampler. Edited by ROBB SAGENDORPH. (New York, Ives Washburn, Inc., 1957, viii, 306 pp., \$5.00.)

Interspersed throughout the pages of this issue of *Agricultural History* are words of wisdom, observations on rural life and

farming practices and other excerpts from *The Old Farmer's Almanac*, published continually since 1792. This is a delightful volume, filled with bits of agricultural history, which is useful even though highly ornamental. Mr. Sagendorph has gleaned a rich harvest from the annual almanac which has graced the living rooms of New England farm homes for more than a century and a half. The material is arranged by subject matter, thus avoiding a mere chronological reprinting of sections. This device lends a degree of unity to the sections of the book which would otherwise be sadly lacking. Agricultural historians should enjoy browsing through the pages of the *Sampler*.

This Is the West. Edited by ROBERT WEST HOWARD. (New York, The New American Library, 1957, 240 pp., 35 cents.)

This is a paper-back edition of a book published in 1957 by Rand-McNally (248 pp., \$6.00). Twenty-five selections, including a few from noted authorities on the American West, comprise the bulk of the book, with a section on "The West You Can Enjoy" providing a travelers' guide, recipes for Western dishes, a partial bibliography of "Books of the West," and a Directory of the International Corrals of The Westerners. The book is dedicated to the "members and posse of the Chicago Corral of the Westerners," of which the editor, Mr. Howard, is a member. This is not a book for the serious scholar of Western history, but it will appeal to the casual reader, to whom it is primarily directed.

The Arabian Horse in America. By GEORGE H. CONN. (Woodstock, Vermont, The Countryman Press, 1957, xl, 308 pp., \$7.50.)

Horse fanciers will find this volume immediately appealing. George Conn is a veterinarian as well as an internationally known horse breeder, and he is the author of countless articles on livestock. In the preface, Dr. Conn writes, "The principal aim

and purpose of this book is to put into permanent and historical form, material dealing with the introduction of the Arabian horse into America and his influence upon the light horse breeds." He dates the introduction of Arabians into America back to Cortez' conquest of Mexico. In addition to readable history, a great attraction to readers will be the dozens of pictures of beautiful Arabian horses.

Poison On the Land: The War On Wild Life and Some Remedies. By J. WENTWORTH DAY. (New York, The Philosophical Library, 1957, x, 246 pp., \$6.00.)

From England comes this message of impending doom for wildlife. The author believes that the modern science of farming, with extensive mechanization and the widespread use of poisonous chemicals, will do incalculable harm to Britain's wild animals, birds and fish unless prompt action is taken. Some worthwhile agricultural history of England appears in these pages—for example, the chapter on "Revolution in Farming." But the reader will detect more than a little bitterness as the author traces the passing of the country squire and the coming of the "factory farms." A passage in the preface reflects somewhat the longing for the wonderful days of yesteryear: "Think of the sweet-tasting, long-keeping, crusty loaves of good bread. . . . Compare them with the soggy, tasteless, blotting-paper which masquerades as bread today." Would Mr. Day like to turn back the clock to regain the status of farming in the early 19th century? These remarks are not meant to detract in any way from the excellent literary quality of a book which calls attention to a major problem of conservation in England. Of course, there is a parallel warning for American sportsmen and conservationists. The author presents adequate truths to prove that farmers have been careless and that short-sightedness needs to be replaced by a long-view.

Notes and Comments

DECEMBER 1957 MEETINGS

The annual joint session with the American Historical Association was held at the Hotel Statler, New York, N. Y., on December 30, 1957. The joint session was preceded by a meeting of the Executive Committee and followed by a general business meeting.

The Society's president, Walter H. Ebling, presided at the meeting of the Executive Committee. The secretary-treasurer presented a preliminary financial report for the year 1957, and stated that 89 new memberships and subscriptions had been paid during the year. Mr. Ebling and Donald L. Kemmerer discussed the work that H. C. M. Case and those aiding him were doing in securing memberships and contributions. The Committee then adopted a resolution expressing its appreciation of Mr. Case's efforts and urging the members of the Society to give him assistance. The incoming editor, C. Clyde Jones, reported upon editorial matters, stating that the University of Illinois is considering the assignment of stenographic and editorial assistants to aid in the publication of the journal. A motion that \$560 be assigned to the editor to cover certain editorial expenses was made, seconded, and passed. Mr. Burmeister moved that the Society express its appreciation to D. A. Brown, our retiring editor, for his efforts on behalf of the journal. The motion was seconded and passed. The Committee then discussed the book award and proposed regulations as drawn up by a committee headed by Lewis E. Atherton. The regulations were adopted as submitted, and the Executive Committee extended its appreciation to Mr. Atherton and the members of his committee for their work.

The joint session was called to order by Mr. Ebling at 2:30 p.m. David J. Brandenburg of American University presented a paper entitled "A French Aristocrat Looks at American Farming: La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt's Voyage dans les Etats-Unis d'Amerique (1795, 1796, 1797)." He pointed out that La Rochefoucauld's writings had been used uncritically by some scholars, but had been neglected by agricultural historians. It was his belief that these writ-

ings offered careful observations of considerable value. Hubert G. Schmidt of Rutgers University presented "Some Post-Revolutionary Views of American Agriculture in the English Midlands," based upon original letters by actual and prospective farm migrants. Many of the migrants planned carefully before moving and had sufficient capital to establish themselves as farm owners upon arrival in the United States. Jerome Blum of Princeton University, in his formal comments on the papers, pointed out that both papers cast doubt upon some of the generally accepted traditions of migration and farm settlement. A floor discussion, with Broadus Mitchell, Dwight W. Morrow, Jr., Charles A. Burmeister, and others participating, followed.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Mr. Ebling called the group to order for a brief business meeting. The secretary-treasurer distributed copies of a preliminary financial statement for 1957, and reported briefly on behalf of the editor. The editor urged attention to the new book award and to the Edwards Memorial Awards. Very few papers by students are being submitted, and members are asked to remind their students of the awards.

Mr. Ebling reported on Mr. Case's membership and fund raising activities. Mr. Case would welcome help from all members who would send him names and addresses of prospective members. A motion was made, seconded, and passed that the Society express its appreciation to Mr. Case and urge its members to send him names. Mr. Burmeister reported on efforts being made to increase membership in the Washington area. The adoption of the plan for a yearly book award was announced. Mr. Morrow suggested that horticulturists might be interested in agricultural history, and Mr. Ebling mentioned the possibility of joint memberships in the social science organizations. There being no further business, the meeting then adjourned.

CARLETON R. BALL, 1873-1958

Carleton R. Ball, a charter member of the Agricultural History Society, died in Washington, D. C., on February 2, 1958. Born

in Iowa and educated at Iowa State College, Dr. Ball served in the Department of Agriculture from 1899 to 1930. After working four years with the Bureau of Public Administration, University of California, he returned to Washington as executive secretary of the coordinating committee of the Tennessee Valley Authority, Department of Agriculture, and State Experiment Stations. He was the author of a two-volume work on government cooperation in agriculture and of nearly 200 articles on agronomy and botany, many of which had historical aspects. At the time of his death he was working on a historical survey of the uses of willows. Many members of the Society will remember Dr. Ball for his outstanding service over a period of years as chairman of its Museum Committee.

Clyde H. Cantrell, Director of Libraries, Alabama Polytechnic Institute, Auburn, Alabama, is studying the complete reading habits of a selected number of ante-bellum Southerners. Diaries, letters, autobiographies, etc. constitute the chief sources for investigation. Any information as to where such data may be found will be appreciated by Mr. Cantrell.

The University of New Mexico Library announces "a microfilm of manuscripts and records housed in the U. S. Bureau of Land Management, Santa Fe, arranged and filmed by the Special Collections Divisions of the University of New Mexico Library" (65 reels, \$635.00). The collection includes Spanish and Mexican materials dating from 1685, assembled in the late 19th century to help establish recognition of Spanish and Mexican land grants in New Mexico as required by the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. An index of the collection will be published in 1958 by the University of New Mexico Press. Address all inquiries to David Otis Kelley, University Librarian, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The University of Oregon Library at Eugene now houses the personal papers of the late Colonel William Buckout Greeley, Chief of the United States Forest Service

from 1920 to 1928. Included in these papers are diaries, letters, pictures, speeches and other written materials of a man who helped shape American forestry policy. Other Greeley papers are held in the National Archives as a part of United States Department of Agriculture records.

The University of Kentucky Press announces the forthcoming publication of *The Papers of Henry Clay*, edited by James F. Hopkins and Mary W. M. Hargreaves. Ten volumes are planned, with the first scheduled for this year. Mrs. Hargreaves is a member of the Agricultural History Society and a contributor to past issues of the journal.

The Council on Library Resources, Inc., has made a grant to the American Historical Association for a "Guide to Photographed Historical Materials in the United States and Canada." The Canadian Historical Association will cooperate in the work. Professor Richard W. Hale, Jr., Boston University, will direct the project.

Papers on "The Frontier—An American Phenomenon?" were read before the European Association for American Studies in Paris, France, September 3-6, 1957. Roy F. Nichols of the University of Pennsylvania delivered a paper entitled "The Present State of American Research on the Frontier Problem" and Dietrich Gerhard of Washington and the University of Cologne spoke on "The American Frontier in Comparative View."

Various aspects of frontier history will also be considered at the Second International Congress of Historians of the United States and Mexico next November 4-6 in Austin, Texas. Inquiries about the meetings should be sent to Archibald R. Lewis, Secretary General, Second International Congress, University of Texas.

The records of the North Dakota Wheat Growers Association have been deposited in the library of the University of North Dakota. The Association operated as a wheat pool from 1922 to 1931.

RECENT ARTICLES OF INTEREST

- Agriculture*—November, 1957: "The Ancient Cattle of England," by Sydney Moorhouse.
- American Historical Review*—October, 1957: "Medieval Real Estate Developments," by Bruce Lyon.
- Idaho Yesterdays*—Summer, 1957: "Reluctant Shepherds: the Basques in Idaho," by Pat Bieter.
- Maryland Historical Magazine*—June and September, 1957: "Kent Island," by Eric Isaac.
- Mid-America*—October, 1957: "The Failure of North Dakota Progressivism," by Charles N. Glaab.
- Minnesota History*—September, 1957: "The Alliance Party and the Minnesota Legislature of 1891," by Carl H. Christlock.
- New Mexico Historical Review*—October, 1957: "Sheep Shearing in New Mexico 1956," by J. D. Robb.
- Southwestern Historical Quarterly*—October, 1957: "Cotton Ginning in Texas to 1861," by Raymond E. White; "Barbed Wire in Texas," by Henry D. McCallum.
- The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*—October, 1957: "England's Tobacco Trade in the Reign of Charles I," by Neville Williams; "Virginia in 1632," edited by Robert C. Johnson.

THE AUTHORS

W. H. G. ARMYTAGE is professor of education at The University, Sheffield, England. He is the author of *A. J. Mundella: the Liberal Background to the Labour Movement* (1951); *Civic Universities* (1955); and *Sir Richard Gregory* (1957). He is currently writing a book called *The Utopian Underground*.

HUGH C. BAILEY is associate professor of history at Howard College, Birmingham, Alabama. He is the author of "Disloyalty in Early Confederate Alabama" (*The Journal of Southern History* [November 1957]).

JOHN PHILIP GLEASON, a graduate student at the University of Notre Dame, is presently engaged in writing his doctoral dissertation under a fellowship from the United States Steel Foundation since September, 1957.

WILLIAM W. ROGERS is Director of the Florida State University "Bootstrap Program" at Moody Air Force Base, Valdosta, Georgia. He is completing his doctoral dissertation for the University of North Carolina.

FREDERIC O. SARGENT is assistant professor of agricultural economics at the A & M College of Texas. He studied in the Sorbonne, 1949-1950, as a Fulbright Scholar. From 1950 to 1954 he was an agricultural economist with the Marshall Plan Organization.

The Everett Eugene Edwards Awards in Agricultural History

The Agricultural History Society, in partial recognition of the outstanding services of Everett E. Edwards to the organization and in honor of his memory, has established the Everett Eugene Edwards Memorial Awards to be given to the authors of the two best articles (presidential addresses excluded) in *Agricultural History* each year. One prize of \$50.00 is offered for the best manuscript submitted by an author who is in the course of taking a degree and one prize of \$50.00 for the best published article by an author who is a more advanced scholar.

The Awards are financed from the Edwards Memorial Fund to which all members of the Society and other interested persons are invited to subscribe. However, the amounts necessary to pay the Awards for a period of ten years have been guaranteed by three of Edwards' former co-workers.

All articles to be considered for publication and other communications regarding editorial matters should be addressed to C. CLYDE JONES, Editor, *Agricultural History*, 112 David Kinley Hall, Urbana, Illinois. Address inquiries regarding the MEMORIAL FUND, MEMBERSHIP IN THE SOCIETY, and business matters to WAYNE D. RASMUSSEN, Secretary-Treasurer, U. S. Agricultural Marketing Service, Washington 25, D. C.

New Contributors and Members

The following list represents new contributors and members of the Agricultural History Society obtained through the activities of the Society's Membership Committee, September 1957 to March 1958. The names are those submitted through Professor H. C. M. Case and may not include new memberships entered directly through the Business Office in Washington, D. C.

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AGRICULTURAL HISTORY

The Agricultural History Society has a continuing demand for back numbers of *Agricultural History*. Please return any copies that will otherwise be discarded.

The Society particularly needs copies issued before 1940, and can make substantial allowances on membership fees in return for such copies. The Society will act as your agent in disposing of sets for the years prior to 1940.

AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Room 3446, South Agriculture Building

U. S. Agricultural Marketing Service

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Journal Of Farm Economics

Published by THE AMERICAN FARM ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION

Editor: ROBERT L. CLODIUS

University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin

Volume XL	February 1958	Number 1
Menu Data and Their Contribution to Food Consumption Studies	<i>Harry E. Allison, Charles J. Zwick and Ayres Brinser</i>	
Some Implications of Monetary Policy on Agriculture		<i>Raymond J. Doll</i>
Food Price Controls Reconsidered		<i>Allen B. Paul</i>
Meat Production in the U. K.: A Study of Government Policy	<i>E. A. Attwood and G. Hallett</i>	
The Plantation System in the Development of Tropical Economies		<i>V. D. Wickizer</i>
Some Issues in Agricultural Development in Iraq		<i>Montague Yudelman</i>
Alligation, Forerunner of Linear Programming		<i>Frederick V. Waugh</i>
Application of Queueing Theory in Determining Livestock Unloading Facilities	<i>Clifton B. Cox, A. Glickstein and James H. Greene</i>	

This Journal contains additional articles, notes, book reviews, and announcement of new bulletins in *Agricultural Economics* and is published in February, May, August, November and December. Yearly subscription \$7.00.

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